A MODERN MISCELLANY

THE WAYFARERS' LIBRARY

A MODERN MISCELLANY

Being a collection of Essays

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NOTE

It is a common practice among authors to republish their essays in book form, and such collections have a value apart from any intrinsic merit in the essays themselves, because they enable the reader to follow the author's mind in his attacks on a variety of different subjects, to observe and compare a group of phenomena through the same lens.

A miscellany of essays, such as is this book, has a different but no less potent appeal. Here the reader's interest is engaged in sensing the contrasts of thought and method, the clashes of style, felt sharply as he turns from the end of one essay to the beginning of the next. To emphasise this sensation the essays in this book are grouped under broad similarities of subject. And readers who are not occupied with this aspect of the "miscellany" form will find sufficient entertainment in any one essay to enable them to forget the rest of the book.

The authors represented are all of the present century.

E. F. B.

1928.

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WAYFARING ESSAYS

THE SAMPHIRE GATHERER

By W. H. Hudson

At sunset, when the strong wind from the sea was beginning to feel cold, I stood on the top of the sandhill looking down at an old woman hurrying about over the low damp ground beneath—a bit of sea-flat divided from the sea by the ridge of sand; and I wondered at her, because her figure was that of a feeble old woman, yet she moved—I had almost said flitted—over that damp level ground in a surprisingly swift light manner, pausing at intervals to stoop and gather something from the surface. But I couldn't see her distinctly enough to satisfy myself: the sun was sinking below the horizon, and that dimness in the air and coldness in the wind at day's decline, when the year too was declining, made all objects look dim. Going down to her I found that she was old, with thin grey hair on an uncovered head, a lean dark face with regular features and grey eyes that were not old and looked steadily at mine, affecting me with a sudden mysterious sadness. For they were unsmiling eyes and themselves expressed an unutterable sadness, as it appeared to me at the first swift glance; or perhaps not that, as it presently

seemed, but a shadowy something which sadness had left in them, when all pleasure and all interest in life forsook her, with all affections, and she no longer cherished either memories or hopes. This may be nothing but conjecture or fancy, but if she had been a visitor from another world she could not have seemed more strange to me.

I asked her what she was doing there so late in the day, and she answered in a quiet even voice which had a shadow in it too, that she was gathering samphire of that kind which grows on the flat saltings and has a dull green leek-like fleshy leaf. At this season, she informed me, it was fit for gathering to pickle and put by for use during the year. She carried a pail to put it in, and a table-knife in her hand to dig the plants up by the roots, and she also had an old sack in which she put every dry stick and chip of wood she came across. She added that she had gathered samphire at this same spot every August end for very many years.

I prolonged the conversation, questioning her and listening with affected interest to her mechanical answers, while trying to fathom those unsmiling, unearthly eyes that looked so steadily at mine.

And presently, as we talked, a babble of human voices reached our ears, and half turning we saw the crowd, or rather procession, of golfers coming from the golf-house by the links where they had been drinking tea. Ladies and gentlemen players, forty or more of them, following in a loose line, in couples and small groups, on their way to the

Golfers' Hotel, a little further up the coast; a remarkably good-looking lot with well-fed happy faces, well dressed and in a merry mood, all freely talking and laughing. Some were staying at the hotel, and for the others a score or so of motor-cars were standing before its gates to take them inland to their homes, or to houses where they were staying.

We suspended the conversation while they were passing us, within three yards of where we stood, and as they passed the story of the links where they had been amusing themselves since luncheon-time came into my mind. The land there was owned by an old, an ancient, family; they had occupied it, so it is said, since the Conquest; but the head of the house was now poor, having no house property in London, no coal mines in Wales, no income from any other source than the land, the twenty or thirty thousand acres let for farming. Even so he would not have been poor, strictly speaking, but for the sons, who preferred a life of pleasure in town, where they probably had private establishments of their own. At all events they kept race-horses, and had their cars, and lived in the best clubs, and year by year the patient old father was called upon to discharge their debts of honour. It was a painful position for so estimable a man to be placed in, and he was much pitied by his friends and neighbours, who regarded him as a worthy representative of the best and oldest family in the county. But he was compelled to do what he could to make both

ends meet, and one of the little things he did was to establish golf-links over a mile or so of sand-hills, lying between the ancient coast village and the sea, and to build and run a Golfers' Hotel in order to attract visitors from all parts. In this way, incidentally, the villagers were cut off from their old direct way to the sea and deprived of those barren dunes, which were their open space and recreation ground and had stood them in the place of a common for long centuries. They were warned off and told that they must use a path to the beach which took them over half a mile from the village. And they had been very humble and obedient and had made no complaint. Indeed, the agent had assured them that they had every reason to be grateful to the overlord, since in return for that trivial inconvenience they had been put to they would have the golfers there, and there would be employment for some of the village boys as caddies. Nevertheless, I had discovered that they were not grateful but considered that an injustice had been done to them, and it rankled in their hearts.

I remembered all this while the golfers were streaming by, and wondered if this poor woman did not, like her fellow-villagers, cherish a secret bitterness against those who had deprived them of the use of the dunes where for generations they had been accustomed to walk or sit or lie on the loose yellow sands among the barren grasses, and had also cut off their direct way to the sea where they went daily in search of bits of firewood and

ON TAKING A HOLIDAY

BY A. G. GARDINER

("*Alpha of the Plough*")

I HOPE the two ladies from the country who have been writing to the newspapers to know what sights they ought to see in London during their Easter holiday will have a nice time. I hope they will enjoy the tube and have fine weather for the Monument, and whisper to each other successfully in the whispering gallery of St. Paul's, and see the dungeons at the Tower and the seats of the mighty at Westminster, and return home with a harvest of joyful memories. But I can promise them that there is one sight they will not see. They will not see me. Their idea of a holiday is London. My idea of a holiday is forgetting there is such a place as London.

Not that I dislike London. I should like to see it. I have long promised myself that I would see it. Some day, I have said, I will surely have a look at this place. It is a shame, I have said, to have lived in it so long and never to have seen it. I suppose I am not much worse than other Londoners. Do you, sir, who have been taking the morning bus from Balham for heaven knows how many years—do you, when you are walking down Fleet Street,

stand still with a shock of delight as the dome of St. Paul's and its cross of gold burst on your astonished sight? Do you go on a fine afternoon and take your stand on Waterloo Bridge to see that wondrous river façade that stretches with its cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces from Westminster to St. Paul's? Do you know the spot where Charles was executed, or the church where there are the best Grinling Gibbons carvings? Did you ever go into Somerset House to see the will of William Shakespeare, or—in short, did you ever see London? Did you ever see it, not with your eyes merely, but with your mind, with the sense of revelation, of surprise, of discovery? Did you ever see it as those two ladies from the country will see it this Easter as they pass breathlessly from wonder to wonder? Of course not. You need a holiday in London as I do. You need to set out with young Tom (aged ten) on a voyage of discovery and see all the sights of this astonishing city as though you had come to it from a far country.

That is how I hope to visit it—some day. But not this Easter, not when I know the beech woods are dressing themselves in green and the cherry blossoms are out in the orchards and the great blobs of the chestnut tree are ready to burst, and the cuckoo is calling all day long and the April meadows are "smoored wi' new grass," as they say in the Yorkshire dales. Not when I know that by putting down a bit of paper at the magic casement at Paddington I can be whisked between sunset and

dawn to the fringe of Dartmoor and let loose—shall it be from Okehampton or Bovey Tracy or Moreton Hampstead? what matter the gate by which we enter the sanctuary?—let loose, I say, into the vast spaces of earth and sky where the moorland streams sing their ancient runes over the boulders and the great tors stand out like castles of the gods against the horizon and the Easter sun dances, as the legend has it, overhead and founders gloriously in the night beyond Plymouth Sound.

Or, perhaps, ladies, if you come from the North, I may pass you unawares, and just about the time when you are cracking your breakfast egg in the boarding house at Russell Square—heavens, Russell Square!—and discussing whether you shall first go down the deepest lift or up the highest tower, or stand before the august ugliness of Buckingham Palace, or see the largest station or the smallest church, I shall be stepping out from Keswick, by the lapping waters of Derwentwater, hailing the old familiar mountains as they loom into sight, looking down again—think of it!—into the Jaws of Borrowdale, having a snack at Rosthwaite, and then, hey for Styehead! up, up over the rough mountain track, with the buzzard circling with slow flapping wings about the mountain flanks, with glorious Great Gable for my companion on the right hand and no less glorious Scafell for my companion on the left hand, and at the rocky turn in the track — lo! the great amphitheatre of Wasdale, the last sanctuary of lakeland.

And at this point, ladies, you may as you crane your neck to see the Duke of York at the top of his column—wondering all the while who the deuce the fellow was that he should stand so high—you may, I say, if you like, conceive me standing at the top of the pass, taking my hat from my head and pronouncing a terrific curse on the vandals who would desecrate the last temple of solitude by driving a road over this fastness of the mountains in order that the gross tribe of motorists may come with their hoots and their odours, their hurry and vulgarity, and chase the spirit of the mountains away from us for ever. . . . And then by the screes of Great Gable to the hollow among the mountains. Or perchance, I may turn by Sprinkling Tarn and see the Pikes of Langdale come into view and stumble down Rossett Ghyll and so by the green pastures of Langdale to Grasmere.

In short, ladies, I may be found in many places. But I shall not tell you where. I am not quite sure that I could tell you where at this moment, for I am like a fellow who has come into great riches and is doubtful how he can squander them most gloriously. But, I repeat, ladies, that you will not find me in London I leave London to you. May you enjoy it.

THE VENICE OF ENGLAND

By H. J. Massingham

Than Blakeney on the north coast of Norfolk there is no lonelier place in England, so lone and level that the sun vaults over it in one majestic sweep from east to west, like a grasshopper bounding over a strip of lawn. Under the cupola of the heavens the eye rests on nothing but a hut or an old hulk stranded in the mud of the tidal creeks, and they are stars in a void the emptier for them, while sky and land and sea are interpenetrated each with the other, mingling their essences in a partnership of Titan substance which seems to be designing the birth of new worlds. And elemental birth there is, for these calm solitudes are the theatre of an intense energy condensed into a speck of geological time, a grandiose parade and strife of forces, a procreant urge, a crest and subsidence of being that lay the ferment of creation bare to our wonder.

Blakeney Point is a narrow tongue of land built up of the three great systems of the shore, sand dune, shingle beach and salting, running parallel with the tidal marshes of the mainland and separated from it by an estuary which at low tide is a river and at high an inland sea. Within this area clash

the powers of land and sea. The sea rolls in its regiments of shingle, depositing petrified waves of it in parallel humps and furrows, fosses and ramparts against its own advance: the shingle creeps upon the land, but the *Pelvetia* seaweed and the *Suæda* bushes wave their fronds upon its crests, arresting and scooping it about the matted filaments with which they clench the stones; the sea flings out its flying squadrons of sand and the wiry marram grass holds it tight and presses it into the service of life-giving soil, throwing up a range of sandhills in ten years, while the parallel ranges behind shrink as the wind bears down upon them and scatters their grains away; the columns of the waves charge upon the land and leave in their tidal drift the seeds of plants which garment sand and stone with living greens and greys. The earth in its turn casts the spray of its teeming growth into the sea's challenge, some of it—hawkweed, dock, plantain, crowfoot, stonecrop, mayweed, catchfly and bird's-foot trefoil —mindful of their ancient home; others—glaucous sea-purslane, sea-lavender, sea-aster, samphire, sea-rocket, the oyster-plant with its delicate blue flower and the polymorphic sea-campion with its seven varieties, some with lobed petals, others incurved —adopted of the sea and the flowers of its garden. There is no element, process nor growth here that does not take from and give to its fellows, that, ever restless, mobile and unstable, does not image in every stage of development and decay the heave and tumble of the waves that travel in from the Pole.

And the colours of Blakeney, the Venice of England, if, as Dr. Oliver says, Venice be not the Blakeney of Italy, are truly the sparks and flares of the elemental factory. The land moves not only in the mirage of the heat-haze's undulating light; the silver-grey foliage of the sea-purslane shifting to pink through the young leaves, like a young hare's transparent ear, and to lavender in the shadows, is a tiny reflection of the huge mobility of colour in the full landscape. The ultramarine of sky paling to turquoise on the horizon, of the sea shot like silk with green; the metallic emerald of the algæ on the mud-flats; the umber of the sandhills; the yellows, oranges, greens and whites of the flowers; the pearls of the shells sewn like jewels into the shingle-pelt, exchange their glowing robes every minute according to the drying of the ground and the density of vapour in different places, and in their flushing or pallor, with all the grades of tone between, seem to dramatise in their medium all the moods of passionate life, of becoming, of being and of dying.

Of this creative power and vehemence, seen in its very discharge, the terns are the perfect art and expression. They are the absolute of bird-life in the sense that their inhuman loveliness, though the most highly finished of that of any bird known to me, is yet elemental, making one reflect that in evolution we do not get rid of the elemental, but see further into it. They are elemental in Nature's world, as Blake is in ours, the elysian flower of the

tough roots of things, so fair, free and frail that they might well be the substance, hovering on the border between sense and spirit, of wind, wave and "argentine vapour." If they were souls, they would yet enjoy the earth; if creatures of flesh, theirs too an immaterial world. The experience of walking among their airy legions in the full breeding season is one of the richest and strangest. At Blakeney Point and on the Salt-house marshes at its heel some four thousand of them were nesting in 1922 among black-headed gulls, oyster-catchers, ringed plover, sheld-duck and redshank, five species in all, the Common, the Arctic, the Sandwich, the Little and the Roseate Tern, the last (one pair) faint-blushed with rose beneath for the dazzling white of the Sandwich and the pearls of the others, with longer streamers and even finer build, carrying tern-structure to the extremest point of art in delicacy of line and shape. A little more, one feels, and this rarest being would be resolved back into mist and spray.

Nor is he far from them, for the plumage trader and the collector have so reduced the number that the remnant find it hard to keep a foothold among the multitude of their brethren. They show the same nicety of differentiation in other directions, the Sandwich being as large in proportion to the Common and Arctic Terns as the Little Tern is small, more wavering on the wing, and with a crescent of white between the bill and the black cap, which so precisely adjusts and focuses in them

all the relations of the white, grey and coral of legs, wings, body and bill. The bill of the Sandwich Tern is black and the Arctic is slightly darker on the breast than the Common. These shades of difference grow more perceptible with a closer familiarity. The Little Tern is the most aerial on its angled wing as the Sandwich is more desultory and its strokes more powerful—in the ceremony of courtship a beautiful slow heave. In diving, the Sandwich is a lesser gannet, hurling itself sheer into the water with a plunge that flings the spray ten feet up in the air; the Little Tern stops dead in the air, hovers in its own radiance of flickered wings, twinkles them over its back with fanned and depressed tail, and half closing them in a shiver of the body casts itself right under, as the Common Tern rarely or never does, rising again with white-bait in a moment, like Anadyomene's charger from its submarine stable.

When the human intruder treads warily (if he be not dead to humanity) among the nests of a large tern colony, the birds form a living canopy of shimmering, transparent web above his head, wheeling through each other's ranks under the heavens, a flying carpet of broken lights taken wing and shaking out a cloud of shrill voices like the grating of the shingle in the sea's teeth. The ear tunes itself to the clamour, and the hoarse screech of the Roseate Tern, the harshest of them all to set against its unearthly beauty, the softer *kirr-rit* of the luminous Sandwich Tern, the bright *chit-chit*

of the Little Tern, a note like pebbles gleaming wet, and the steely guttural of the Arctic, beating and swooping frantically a yard above my head, alone among them all for boldness, disentangle themselves like threads of different coloured silk from the fabric of woven sound. He, the Arctic, may well scream like the gales of his home for, with the Roseate, he has one nest of three eggs among the thousand round him, the only record, I believe, of the bird breeding so far south—three gems for the prowling collector.

The eggs and nests of the Common Tern mirror the intense creativeness of this wilderness, an urge of being flooding it like the sea, even more than the mature birds, flung to the air, embody its restlessness of spirit. The eggs of the Roseate Tern are elongated and beautifully zoned with smoky blurs; those of the Little Tern (with a hundred or so nests), similar in brown and grey sprinklings on a light ground to the pear-shaped egg of the ringed plover, do follow within their variations a certain coherence and orderliness of pattern; while of the eighteen nests of the Sandwich Tern, fourteen were unlined, and the large, exquisitely speckled or blotched eggs on a buff, creamy or stone-coloured ground were all laid under the lee of a sand-mound. But with the eggs and nests of the Common Tern, any semblance of uniformity, system, method or symmetry went to the winds, whose caresses into the sand's soft cheek seemed to have dimpled so many of their nests. Caprice in variation was alone

supreme and extended not only to the shape, colour, size and number of the eggs (two were midgets, several were four to a nest, the majority three, and the rest two), but to the position, structure and materials of the nests. They were made indiscriminately in the marram grass, on the sand of the dunes, upon dried mud, in the shingle, at the drift line, among the campion, on the turf, in the herbage, under the nodding fronds of the *Suæda* bushes, whose shadows enriched the markings of their eggs with wandering pencils. Some were conspicuous at thirty yards, others but natural hollows in the anatomy of the ground. Some were elaborately woven of dried herbs, sticks, seaweed decorated with shells, one was embroidered with an empty capsule of beech mast and a skate's egg-case, while stones were often placed among the eggs. A nest containing light green eggs faintly spotted was a cup of black seaweed, and on the same mound of sand a mere scrape would be cheek by jowl with a piece of architecture. Some were lacquered with broken shells in a shingle depression, and one built of small pebbles hollowed out between three cushions of sea-rocket to its equidistant head and sides. Often the nests bore no sort of relation to the character or materials of the ground whereon they were constructed, being unlined among vegetation and lined away from it, neat or tousled, shallow or deep, as pleased the individual fancy of the bridal pair who made them.

As with the nests, so the eggs, nor was there a

hint of correlation between the two nor between them and the ground they occupied. In ground-colour they varied from green to olive, from grey to all shades of brown from buff to Vandyke, while the markings were as light as mauve or dark as chocolate. Some forms were buff with large stains of brownish-black; others blue-green dotted with Payne's grey. Some were heavily zoned, others dustily, others smokily, others again with a faintly stippled wash. Variations, whether of size, shape or colour, were by no means confined to clutches. One nest contained four eggs, each different both in ground-colour and pattern of spots, and another, dexterously compact, three eggs, one almost oval, the others pear-shaped, with one double the size of its neighbour and all individual in colouring. The print of some blotches, streaks and speckles seemed stamped into the texture of the shell; others seemed broken shadows caught in passing. Exuberance joined with variety to make a spendthrift's holiday.

There is a theory that the variations in the brilliant eggs of the Sandwich Tern are the effect of both sexes incubating them, and so rarely leaving them uncovered to enemies. What then of the prodigality in device of the Common Tern's eggs? The answer is because the freakishness, the whimsies, the fantasies almost of taste in nest construction, all the gay adventures from the adaptive and protective norm of coloration, are not weeded out in the struggle for existence, and they are not so weeded because there is no need to clap upon these

tiny hamlets Nature's cap of darkness. It is the terns themselves who are their own defence, not earth's greens, greys and browns. We picked up a wounded tern on the shore away from the ternery and carried this waif and parcel of stricken element light as air, into which had been breathed so wild and rapturous a life, to its fellows—knowing that they would feed it. A party of Greater Black-backed Gulls drifted on ponderous wings as big as clouds among the Ariels of Nature's extra-human thought, and with a scream of rage they set upon them and buffeted them out of the nesting ground. The watcher found a rat on it with its skull perforated by their long sharp bills. It is by the fellowship of mutual aid and concerted action that the terns guard their own, and thus let the djinn out of the bottle. The safety valve of natural selection is removed and the creative force of Nature's life flowers into its full wealth of varied blossom. Some say that these diversities of nest and egg serve the secondary utility of recognition marks, but fundamentally they are the product of each bird's choice, initiative, talent and personality roaming where they will and safe from the shears of the examining Fates.

As we passed, the birds fluttered straight down upon their nests, brooding with their breasts well forward and their tapering wings crossed at a high angle. But as they screamed and circled overhead, moving the heart like a trumpet; as they settled down behind us, making a huge overarching billow

of white foam, there fell a sudden hush and spell upon them. In a silence deep as night the whole body massed and in a long column went out like a streamer of white smoke over the dark blue sea. It was as though in that strange movement the curtain raised upon the play and music of elemental powers, of being, of becoming and of dying, went down and left nothing but the uniform expanses of sky and plain.

The correlations of animate with inanimate nature are so intricate that the least oscillation of the latter from the normal will often make a wilderness of a city or a city of a wilderness. Early in 1922, the sea scored a march against its human foeman on these tidal flats and shingle beaches of Blakeney, and in an impetuous expense of its artillery hammered through a furlong of concrete wall. On one side of the turf bank running between road and beach the land became a shallow broad scrawled over with multiform islands like the hieroglyphs on the yellow-hammer's egg, and on the other water and vegetation came to a deadlock and camped their indiscriminate forces over the ground. Into this tangle of alleys, squares and streets, where the sedges, reeds and water plants made the houses, and the water the open spaces, poured a multitude of birds and founded a city-state in Grecian fashion, but that it was quilted of many nations. Long, crescentic lines of Black-headed Gulls, burnished by

the sun, girdled the seaward frontier of the city, like crusaders after the taking of Jerusalem, and when they rose and drifted out to sea in silver clouds, the city's glittering battlements seemed to have crumbled like Atlantis's that were. A cluster of immature Greater Black-backed Gulls, the van of the hosts which migrate along the coast in the autumn as very symbols of the darkening days, broke in from the north, and in at another gate a troop of sanderling dived in a cascade of white breasts, followed by a single knot who twisted down in the angles of lightning. A throng of cosmopolite citizens ambled the streets and squares in their several national costumes—black and grey coots in their white shields, like the heraldic device of some order, a gallant one judging by the number of duels; green-capped and rufous-belted sheld-duck in white cloaks slashed with black; stockish and massive-billed shovellers in green, white, chestnut and blue with yellow spectacles like aldermen in a free-coloured Morris state; a full-plumaged scaup drake and his white-faced mate (the rarest hyperborean visitors in June), like pochard, with black torso for red, or tufted duck at a distance without the crest; mincing waterhens; lapwings, tourists to Venice from inland plains; herons, lank, primitive and spectral like shadows of their ancestors; swans like the figureheads and hovering terns, the guardian angels of the city; linnets airy as their notes; bustling and hallooing redshank; a tall greenshank like a redshank grown up and lost its mercurial spirits;

dunlin with the black breast-band of the nuptial season; Little Stint like its pigmy form (the urchins of the sandpiper community), and canty Ringed Plover. And as initial verses to this anthology, sounded the skirl of the sedge-warbler, the wheeze of the reed-bunting and the sweeter reed-music of the reed-warbler all along the rushes fringing the turf-bank.

The only unity governing this diversity was one of place, but the nurseries on the other side of the bank had an internal cohesion of common purpose. Two small islands almost flat with the water and shagged with tussocks of marram, other wiry grasses and coarse turf and patched with dry mud, held about eight hundred nests of Sandwich and Common Terns, black-headed gulls, ringed plover and redshank. They were mingled helter-skelter, lined or unlined, slovenly or compact, many so close together as to be semi-detached (the nine Sandwich Terns' nests were within an orbit of three yards), and with eggs so variously shaded and mottled as to make classification of size rather than pattern, colouration or even shape the clue to identity of species. The terns' eggs and nests ran riot in idiosyncrasy, but those of the gulls were hardly less variable—spotted, zoned and splashed with greys, blacks and browns of every tone, on a ground of olive, green, buff, dark brown or blue. Gulls are of a plover-like ancestry, and the Black-head, diverging first to a sea-habit, then a land-habit, and here breeding almost within the spray of high tide, was with his

fancy-roaming eggs and nests consistent in plasticity. One of them was a monument, a palace, a foot high, built on the highest point of the island and broad based on a straddling foundation of interlacing sticks thinning to the grassy apex of the pyramid, on which reposed, like a single blossom topping a bush or one lasting poem out of a lifetime of verses, a solitary egg. This pair alone among their brethren, some with mere twists of grass, had the synoptic view of life; they saw it whole in one sweep from the experience of memory to the prevision of inference; what tides have done before, spoke the tight logic of stick upon stick, tides may do again. Only the lovely treasure of the redshank, with its background of yellow or grey or both (lighter than the lapwing's) and its rich daubs of purples and browns, is concealed in the heart of a tussock, where long grasses play their shadows over it, the fingers of the wind's caress.

Past the sheld-duck on the water, gowned so comely and so bizarre both with her ducklings in their white down banded twice with Vandyke lines, and over on the mainland, the shelf between inland and outer sea, was an oyster-catcher's nest with the rare number of four eggs (streaked and printed grey-brown on a yellowish-grey ground-colour) walled with pebbles in a shingle depression, and one was double-yolked and twice the size of the others, an oddity to make itch the thievish hand of the collector. Once an egg of this same pair rolled out of its hollow nearer the water, and they swung

round and round the watcher's head, wailfully *kleep-kleeping*, until he went to the nest and restored the egg. As I walked over the island the gulls hung screaming low over my head, a roof woven of white wings with the azure one of the world streaming through it. Here were three skies and I marooned on a cloud in the lowest, but only the middle one lived with me and that was all life, broken not only into a mosaic of moving lights but into full a thousand entities of brain and heart and nerve, and among them how many originals like that pair of gulls and oyster-catchers? The city was on one side of the bank, its corporate life on the other, for eggs and nests were safe in fancy-freedom by a common purpose of watch and ward which kept the peace within the ranks of the divers peoples (the gulls, as I was assured and could see for myself, did not touch the terns', redshanks' or plovers' eggs) and every enemy except man and the elements without.

If there is no more individual shore-bird than the redshank, there is none so personable as the Ringed Plover. In social flight when the flock becomes an individual and the birds its several organic parts like the words of a lyric, they resemble sanderling, Little Stint and dunlin; they nest among the terns and gulls, as their fellow-waders (except the redshank) never do, and their charming little pear-shaped eggs, three and sometimes four, are similar, but for shape and position with their narrower ends together in the middle of the nest, to the Little

Tern's. They are not quite so variable in markings, but I found one nest of four eggs with one pair pigmented to type and the other, cream-coloured, without markings of any kind. The sides of the cupped nest are usually embossed with pebbles and broken shells, but I have seen a few nests among the gulls wound with grass bents. The birds are true to the volatile expression of their homes, impinged upon by the restless sea, suffused and rarefied by the elements, and they twinkle over their native shore with a run which seems another phase of flight, but always more waywardly than other small shore-birds, while their plumper and squatter build gives them an inexplicable pathos. Thus they maintain a fellowship of habit with their various associates and yet preserve an essence, unique and particular, of their own.

There is an infallible method of finding out whether ringed plover have eggs or young. If the former, they content themselves with flying in circles round the intruder, with their soft plaints —*peep, peep,* and *toolee, toolee,* the dissyllable being the nuptial call modulated into a quavering trill, when the male weaves his flight-mazes or slides along the ground with humped back and dragging wing. But if the latter, then the female becomes a Lyceum tragic actress in the convulsions of death. Actually she mimics the throes, creeping along in painful spasms with one wing flapping in the air, the other lolling as though broken, and then with head half buried in the shingle, rolls over from side

to side, and with a last shudder agonises into a lifeless, tumbled heap. I am a stoat; my craving for blood is whetted and I bare my teeth as I pad after her. A last paroxysm of life spurts up in her and carries her writhing and floundering another twenty yards. A bestial possession foams the blood through my arteries and I go bounding after her, my snout dilated at the anticipated scent of her blood—and there she is flashing her silver wings over my head with a "hey-nonny-toolee, and keep you low, my child, till I entice him this way and that way far out of yours." The crouching infant three or four hours old, in down of fawn and grey, rucks its nape feathers over the telling black collar and shams stone, but stones do not pulsate, nor when picked up wave stumps of wings and set off on long shanks to tumble head over ears over a rather bigger member of their order. The nest a few yards off has still one egg but no broken shells, which are carried off the nesting ground to give the younglings, one supposes, room and warmth under the parent's breast at night.

The little "dotterels," as they are called locally, are, further, much more circumspect in going on to their eggs than the terns, who come home down the chimney, so to speak. The female returns in a series of runs and pauses, retreats, approaches, goes off at a tangent, sidles nearer, swerves away again, and finally makes a dash for it and settles deeply in with a sigh rippling all over her body.

The eye leaves her, jumps over the waving beds

of sea-campion, threads its way among the hulks of the seals basking on the sand-spit and launches out to sea, crossing the pale bar of the horizon into the immensity of space. The loneliness of the human mind is behind it and it travels further than any winged citizen of this busy township, contented in the fulfilment of its single and commingled lives. And in space that mind is at home, building it with cities of its own workmanship, where all our quest is ended, our frustrations undone, and as these birds know a matchless freedom of body here, so we there an equal freedom of the mind.

JOURNEY'S END

By John Brophy

The train puffed and jolted through the heat of an Egyptian summer afternoon. On the sunward side of the carriage the wooden shutters were all up, but the white glare streamed through the chinks. The hot, gritty dust swirled in from the other window, settled on the horsehair upholstery, already filmed with grey. The sheikh—a teacher of the Koran—slept on the opposite seat, the sweat rolling over the curves of his face to his bare fat neck. A fly explored his twitching eyelids and his open mouth. He had three black teeth. The little Frenchman in the other corner had taken off his white coat and his collar and tie; he sat sucking oranges, the juice dribbling down on to the crumpled pages of *La Liberté* spread across his knees.

I wished I had taken a first-class ticket; it would have been worth the extra piastres for a little more shade, a little less dust, travelling companions slightly less gross. Perhaps I might change into another carriage at Tanta—but I felt too sick and languid to move. The heat was less intense than in the desert, there was not the same beat back of the

white blaze from the earth, but still I felt stifled; the dusty *hamzeen* puffed in my face like a furnace blast; my eyes blinked painfully; my whole body was uneasy and weak, as if the dry, fierce heat had laid soft but horribly strong fingers on me, relentlessly pressing out my strength. I felt hopeless; the sickness of the hinterland was on me. I longed for Alexandria, for the sea.

The sun was racing down the western sky; now it stood poised on the empurpled horizon. The familiar Delta scenery slipping past the opened windows was sobering from bright detail to a procession of shadows and silhouettes. Some of the mud huts showed tiny candles in their interiors; the livid, almost unnaturally bright green of the fields was streaked and mottled now with grey shadows, the brown ploughlands were a dim purple. For a few minutes the flat expanse on either hand shone with a transient softness, a beauty that was almost tender. The sun sent its last glow streaming across the grey and blue dusk, awaking silvery flat reflections on the canals, making gracious silhouettes of the forage camels and buffaloes plodding homeward. An occasional palm bushed and fluffed up, statuesque, into the darkling sky.

But the heavy heat persisted. The train drew up at a dimly-lighted station. There was an immediate bustle of white-gowned natives on the platform; their sharp, excited voices floated into the carriage, strangely muted, softened almost into beauty. I refused a dirty glass of lemonade from an insistent

pedlar. The sheikh woke and bought a slice of melon. He bit deeply into it and spat the pips reflectively around my feet. When the train moved out at last the dark night had taken possession of the countryside; I could not see more than twenty yards from the train. The stars made their accustomed brilliant display overhead, and a great copper moon was rising. Presently, peering out, I could discern low banks of dark, wet sand—the salt wastes where nothing grew. Then an occasional broad leaf would gleam out of the shadows, caught by the pale moonlight—banana groves. And at last came faint puffs and flutters of cool air, delightfully damp and soft on my skin. The coast!

At the station entrance an old unshaven driver assured me that he knew the Pension Ravenna, and the open *arabeyah* rattled off along the darkened Ramleh road. The horses' hooves rang cleanly on the tarmac; the driver's broad, fat shoulders and cocked fez bulked up in front of me against the stars. I lay back in my corner, still sick and weary, but almost happy now. After half an hour the *arabeyah* swung sharply to the left; the wheels bumped over cobbles, crunched through driftsand. For a few minutes we were lost, but a friendly Greek grocer gave me directions and cursed the driver roundly.

There were no street lamps at all and the pension was in half-darkness. The season had not properly begun, the Italian proprietor explained, charmingly

apologetic. The rooms were only half prepared, but he would do his best. Down a broad corridor the big black servant padded, two yards ahead of me. His loose clip-clopping slippers stopped at last; a key turned and I was in a high, bare room. I saw at a glance a cupboard, tall shuttered windows, a bed, a dressing-table, two rugs on the uneven floorboards.

"No mosquito nets?" I asked.

The Sudanese gave a quick pink-and-white grin. No mosquitoes near the sea, he assured me. And his black, bony hands forced the rusty hasps, threw the shutters and the windows clattering back. A cool, damp wind stormed in, saturated with the sea, edged with the tang and smell of the sea. The sea had overlaid everything in the room with a fine salty crust, had warped the furniture, bent the door awry, knotted and twisted the floor-boards; the paintwork was blistered and flaking away; the sea had drunk the colour from the whole room, and left only a pale, bleached dinginess.

The iron rail of the balcony was deeply rusted. I could feel the surface powdering under my hands as I leaned on it. Far away to the left a long line of yellow lamps picked out the curve of the bay. The sea was hidden in the darkness, but I could hear it beating on the shore at my feet; the upward surge of each gathering wave, the rustle and pattering of the topmost foam as it arched to its crest, and then the flat clap and the reverberating boom as it broke

and fall. A little suck back and swirl, until the next wave toppled thunderously. The friendly, comforting sea!

I slept quietly with the slow, rhythmic beat of it echoing in my ears.

ASPECTS OF RELIGION

HEATHENISM

By George Santayana

Schopenhauer somewhere observes that the word heathen, no longer in reputable use elsewhere, had found a last asylum in Oxford, the paradise of dead philosophies. Even Oxford, I believe, has now abandoned it; yet it is a good word. It conveys, as no other word can, the sense of vast multitudes tossing in darkness, harassed by demons of their own choice. No doubt it implies also a certain sanctimony in the superior person who uses it, as if he at least were not chattering in the general Babel. What justified Jews, Christians, and Moslems (as Mohammed in particular insisted) in feeling this superiority was the possession of a Book, a chart of life, as it were, in which the most important features of history and morals were mapped out for the guidance of teachable men. The heathen, on the contrary, were abandoned to their own devices, and even prided themselves on following only their spontaneous will, their habit, presumption, or caprice.

Most unprejudiced people would now agree that the value of those sacred histories and rules of life did not depend on their alleged miraculous origin,

but rather on that solidity and perspicacity in their authors which enabled them to perceive the laws of sweet and profitable conduct in this world. It was not religion merely that was concerned, at least not that outlying, private, and almost negligible sphere to which we often apply this name; it was the whole fund of experience mankind had gathered by living; it was wisdom. Now, to record these lessons of experience, the Greeks and Romans also had their Books; their history, poetry, science, and civil law. So that while the theologically heathen may be those who have no Bible, the morally and essentially heathen are those who possess no authoritative wisdom, or reject the authority of what wisdom they have; the untaught or unteachable who disdain not only revelation but what revelation stood for among early peoples, namely, funded experience.

In this sense the Greeks were the least heathen of men. They were singularly docile to political experiment, to law, to methodical art, to the proved limitations and resources of mortal life. This life they found closely hedged about by sky, earth, and sea, by war, madness, and conscience with their indwelling deities, by oracles and local genii with their accustomed cults, by a pervasive fate, and the jealousy of invisible gods. Yet they saw that these divine forces were constant, and that they exercised their pressure and bounty with so much method that a prudent art and religion could be built up in their midst. All this was simply a poetic prologue to science and the arts; it largely passed into them,

and would have passed into them altogether if the naturalistic genius of Greece had not been crossed in Socrates by a premature discouragement, and diverted into other channels.

Early Hebraism itself had hardly been so wise. It had regarded its tribal and moral interests as absolute, and the Creator as the champion and omnipotent agent of Israel. But this arrogance and inexperience were heathen. Soon the ascendency of Israel over nature and history was proclaimed to be conditional on their fidelity to the Law; and as the spirit of the nation under chastisement became more and more penitential, it was absorbed increasingly in the praise of wisdom. Salvation was to come only by repentance, by being born again with a will wholly transformed and broken; so that the later Jewish religion went almost as far as Platonism or Christianity in the direction opposite to heathenism.

This movement in the direction of an orthodox wisdom was regarded as a progress in those latter days of antiquity when it occurred, and it continued to be so regarded in Christendom until the rise of romanticism. The most radical reformers simply urged that the current orthodoxy, religious or scientific, was itself imperfectly orthodox, being currupt, overloaded, too vague, or too narrow. As every actual orthodoxy is avowedly incomplete and partly ambiguous, a sympathetic reform of it is always in order. Yet very often the reformers are deceived. What really offends them may not be

what is false in the received orthodoxy, but what though true is uncongenial to them. In that case heathenism, under the guise of a search for a purer wisdom, is working in their souls against wisdom of any sort. Such is the suspicion that Catholics would throw on Protestantism, naturalists on idealism, and conservatives generally on all revolutions.

But if ever heathenism needed to pose as constructive reform, it is now quite willing and able to throw off the mask. Desire for any orthodox wisdom at all may be repudiated; it may be set down to low vitality and failure of nerve. In various directions at once we see to-day an intense hatred and disbelief gathering head against the very notion of a cosmos to be discovered, or a stable human nature to be respected. Nature, we are told, is an artificial symbol employed by life; truth is a temporary convention; art is an expression of personality; war is better than peace, effort than achievement, and feeling than intelligence; change is deeper than form; will is above morality. Expressions of this kind are sometimes wanton and only half thought out; but they go very deep in the subjective direction. Behind them all is a sincere revulsion against the difficult and confused undertakings of reason; against science, institutions, and moral compulsions. They mark an honest retreat into immediate experience and animal faith. Man used to be called a rational animal, but his rationality is something eventual and ideal, whereas his animality is actual and profound. Heathen-

ism, if we consider life at large, is the primal and universal religion.

It has never been my good fortune to see wild beasts in the jungle, but I have sometimes watched a wild bull in the ring, and I can imagine no more striking, simple, and heroic example of animal faith; especially when the bull is what is technically called noble, that is, when he follows the lure again and again with eternal singleness of thought, eternal courage, and no suspicion of a hidden agency that is mocking him. What the red rag is to this brave creature, their passions, inclinations, and chance notions are to the heathen. What they will they will; and they would deem it weakness and disloyalty to ask whether it is worth willing or whether it is attainable. The bull, magnificently sniffing the air, surveys the arena with the cool contempt and disbelief of the idealist, as if he said: "You seem, you are a seeming; I do not quarrel with you, I do not fear you. I am real, you are nothing." Then suddenly, when his eye is caught by some bright cloak displayed before him, his whole soul changes. His will awakes and he seems to say: "You are my destiny; I want you, I hate you, you shall be mine, you shall not stand in my path. I will gore you. I will disprove you. I will pass beyond you. I shall be, you shall not have been." Later, when sorely wounded and near his end, he grows blind to all these excitements. He smells the moist earth, and turns to the dungeon where an hour ago he was at peace. He remembers the herd, the pasture

beyond, and he dreams: "I shall not die, for I love life. I shall be young again, young always, for I love youth. All this outcry is nought to me, this strange suffering is nought. I will go to the fields again, to graze, to roam, to love."

So exactly, with not one least concession to the unsuspected reality, the heathen soul stands bravely before a painted world, covets some bauble, and defies death. Heathenism is the religion of will, the faith which life has in itself because it is life, and in its aims because it is pursuing them.

In their tentative, many-sided, indomitable way, the Germans have been groping for four hundred years towards a restoration of their primitive heathenism. Germany under the long tutelage of Rome had been like a spirited and poetic child brought up by very old and very worldly foster-parents. For many years the elfin creature may drink in their gossip and their maxims with simple wonder; but at last he will begin to be restive under them, ask himself ominous questions, protest, suffer, and finally break into open rebellion. Naturally he will not find at first theories and precepts of his own to take the place of his whole education; he will do what he can with his traditions, revising, interpreting, and patching them with new ideas; and only if he has great earnestness and speculative power will he ever reach an unalloyed expression of his oppressed soul.

Now in Germany speculative power and earnestness existed in a high degree, not, of course, in most

people, but in the best and most representative; and it was this *élite* that made the Reformation, and carried it on into historical criticism and transcendental philosophy, until in the nineteenth century, in Schopenhauer, Wagner, and Nietzsche, the last remnants of Christian education were discarded and the spontaneous heathen morality of the race reasserted itself in its purity. That this assertion was not consistent, that it was thrown into the language and images of some alien system, is not to be wondered at; but the Christianity of Parsifal, like the Buddhism of the denial of the will, is a pure piece of romanticism, an exotic setting for those vacillations and sinkings which absolute Will may very well be subject to in its absolute chaos.

The rebellion of the heathen soul is unmistakable in the Reformation, but it is not recognised in this simple form, because those who feel that it was justified do not dream that it was heathen, and those who see that it was heathen will not admit that it was justified. Externally, of course, it was an effort to recover the original essence of Christianity; but why should a free and absolute being care for that original essence when he has discovered it, unless his own mind demanded that very thing? And if his mind demanded it, what need has he to read that demand into an ancient revelation which, as a matter of fact, turned on quite other matters? It was simply the inertia of established prejudice that made people use tradition to correct tradition; until the whole substance of

tradition, worn away by that internal friction, should be dissolved, and impulse and native genius should assert themselves unimpeded.

Judaism and Christianity, like Greek philosophy, were singly inspired by the pursuit of happiness, in whatever form it might be really attainable: now on earth if possible, or in the millennium, or in some abstracted and inward life, like that of the Stoics, or in the last resort, in a different life altogether beyond the grave. But heathenism ignores happiness, despises it, or thinks it impossible. The regimen and philosophy of Germany are inspired by this contempt for happiness, for one's own happiness as well as for other people's. Happiness seems to the German moralists something unheroic, an abdication before external things, a victory of the senses over the will. They think the pursuit of happiness low, materialistic, and selfish. They wish everybody to sacrifice or rather to forget happiness, and to do "deeds."

It is in the nature of things that those who are incapable of happiness should have no idea of it. Happiness is not for wild animals, who can only oscillate between apathy and passion. To be happy, even to conceive happiness, you must be reasonable or (if Nietzsche prefers the word) you must be tamed. You must have taken the measure of your powers, tasted the fruits of your passions and learned your place in the world and what things in it can really serve you. To be happy you must be wise. This happiness is sometimes found instinctively,

and then the rudest fanatic can hardly fail to see how lovely it is; but sometimes it comes of having learned something by experience (which empirical people never do) and involves some chastening and renunciation; but it is not less sweet for having this touch of holiness about it, and the spirit of it is healthy and beneficent. The nature of happiness, therefore, dawns upon philosophers when their wisdom begins to report the lessons of experience: an *a priori* philosophy can have no inkling of it.

Happiness is the union of vitality with art, and in so far as vitality is a spiritual thing and not mere restlessness and vehemence, art increases vitality. It obviates friction, waste, and despair. Without art, vitality is painful and big with monsters. It is hurried easily into folly and crime; it ignores the external forces and interests which it touches. German philosophy does this theoretically, by dethroning the natural world and calling it an idea created by the ego for its own purposes; and it does this practically also by obeying the categorical imperative—no longer the fabled imperatives of Sinai or of Königsberg, but the inward and vital imperative which the bull obeys, when trusting absolutely in his own strength, rage, and courage, he follows a little red rag and his destiny this way and that way.

RENAN'S "LIFE OF JESUS"

By The Rt. Rev. Charles Gore

Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, published in Paris in 1863, has had an enormous circulation in the French original and in translations into many languages. That it is still in demand in English is shown by the present reissue.[1] Nor is it hard to account for its vast success. It was partly what the French call a "succès de scandale," for, as written by one who had received the best training for the priesthood which the Catholic Church of France could give, and had revolted, it was a profound offence to orthodoxy all the world over, and was eagerly devoured in an age of Liberalism which in many lands found "the clergy the enemy." Here, indeed, was a picture of a purely human Jesus, preaching an individualistic religion, without dogmas and without priests, an "emancipation of the spirit" from the fetters of creed or church. But others in Germany and elsewhere had written books quite as offensive to orthodoxy without producing any similarly world-wide sensation. Ernest Renan had at his disposal the conditions of extraordinary popularity in an incomparable style, such as is

[1] A reprint in *Everyman's Library*.

apparent even in a translation, and a captivating spirit of romance and sentimentalism, to which he gave the loose rein and by which he fascinated multitudes to whom learned treatises would make no appeal. The wide world of those who loved pious sentiments and democratic and humanitarian ideals, while at the same time resenting the claims of priests and dogmas, had here set before it in exquisite language exactly what it wanted and was ready to assimilate. No doubt the rationalistic world of scientific scholarship demurred and has continued to demur to Renan's criticism, and has pronounced the book to be a sentimental romance rather than a history. We may notice that an advanced critic, reviewing the recent literature about Renan and his *Vie de Jésus* which was published in France in or about the centenary of his birth (1923), has declared that an orthodox scholar had no need to write a scientific refutation. "Père Lagrange has thought it necessary to renew the execution of the celebrated book which the orthodox hate. I do not understand why he has taken this trouble, for to-day there is nobody, I suppose, to be found to defend the *Vie de Jésus* from the point of view of science" (Charles Guignebert in the *Revue Historique*, September—October 1926, p. 61). We will return to the causes of this critical repudiation of Renan's picture. But the murmurs of the critics were faintly heard in comparison with the clamours or shrieks of the orthodox, and in the atmosphere of the time the latter only added to the popularity of the book.

Rt. Rev. CHARLES GORE

If I have been chosen by the publishers of this translation to write a very brief Introduction to a work which has been more than sixty years in circulation, it is certainly not because I could be expected to write a panegyric, nor because I was wanted to write a denunciation, but because what was desired was a critical estimate, from a present-day point of view—a very different day from Renan's own.

There were those in Renan's day, and there are some in our own, who by means of "the mythical theory" have sought to justify the almost total repudiation of the Gospels as historical documents, and have even gone so far as to doubt the existence of the Jesus of Nazareth who is their central figure. Renan was very far from such a position, and to-day historical science is on his side. I suppose the greatest living historian of antiquity is Eduard Meyer. He is as far as possible from orthodoxy. Anything miraculous or supernatural is to him incredible. But in his *Origin and Beginnings of Christendom* (1924) he ridicules the New Testament critics of his own country as exhibiting a kind of scepticism as to the authenticity and genuineness of documents which would not be accepted for a moment on the wider field of the history of antiquity in which he is an acknowledged master. Thus it is, he finds, indisputable that the occasional historical reminiscences which St. Paul gives us in his letters to his converts, concerning the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and concerning the

institution of the eucharist (1 Cor. xi. 23 ff.; xv. 1 ff.), accurately represent what St. Paul had received at Damascus and Jerusalem, as the authoritative teaching of the original apostles, a "fast-formulated tradition," when he was first converted, a few years after the crucifixion of Jesus. Again, there is not, according to Meyer, any legitimate reason for doubting that the second Gospel—which forms the basis for the first which bears the name of St. Matthew, and for the third which bears the name of St. Luke—was really written by the John Mark whom we hear of in the Acts as living in his mother's house at Jerusalem, which was the centre for the apostolic company in the earliest days, who later was the companion of his cousin Barnabas and the converted persecutor, Saul, and afterwards, according to a trustworthy tradition, was the companion or interpreter of Peter, the chief of the Twelve, on his evangelistic tours, and who gives us in his Gospel especially the teaching of Peter, doubtless often repeated in his hearing, consisting of his reminiscences of Jesus. Again, there is, Meyer assures us, no reason to doubt that the third Gospel, incorporating the greater part of Mark's Gospel, and drawing also, like the first Gospel, upon a primitive record especially of the words of Jesus—which is now commonly known among critics as Q, the initial letter of the German word *Quelle*, "the source"—is the work of Luke, forming one whole with the Acts. This Luke was an educated Grecian—the beloved physician or companion of

St. Paul — who had abundant opportunities of inquiry from first-hand witnesses in Palestine, who bases his Gospel on his own inquiries as well as on written sources, and gives us in his admirable preface an account of his motives and ideas in writing. This work (the third Gospel and the Acts taken together) Meyer declares to be "one of the most important historical works which remain to us from antiquity." Thus it is quite unscientific, Meyer says, to suggest that in the Gospels we have only the account of Jesus as it was given after a considerable period of development by the second generation of Christians or later: we are taken back to the original apostolic circle of those who had known Him intimately (*genau*) and to their deliberate account of their own experiences. This sort of estimate of the value of our original Gospel documents is substantially the same as that of the other celebrated German, Adolf Harnack, who again is far removed from orthodoxy, but who has been compelled to revise his earlier views of the documents in accordance with the evidence, and whose position is much the same as that more recently adopted by Meyer. It was he who startled critical Europe by proclaiming in 1897 the necessity of "a return to tradition" in our estimate of the New Testament documents. This "retrogression" is noticeable in recent years, not only with regard to the "synoptic" (the first three) Gospels, but also to the fourth (St. John). There is still wide dispute as to its authorship. But whereas it used to be

regarded by the critical world as a philosophical romance emanating from the Hellenistic atmosphere of Ephesus in the second century, it is now recognised more and more widely among scholars as an undoubtedly Jewish document, embodying an historical memory of an original Jerusalem witness, which must be allowed at point after point to supplement and correct the impression left by the earlier Gospels as to the ministry of Jesus.

All this means that Renan was largely right in his estimate of the historical value of the documents. He treats them, when his assumptions allow him to do so, as giving us trustworthy history. But his assumptions are very exacting. The Jesus of the documents is presented to us as indeed true man—thoroughly and really human. But the evidences of the supernatural and the miraculous are quite as undoubtedly there in full force from the first. Renan's assumptions, like those of Meyer and Harnack, forbid him to contemplate the authenticity of these elements in the representation as even a possibility. Thus these critics are obliged to deal with the documents (as it seems to those of us who do not share their dogmatic assumptions) in a highly arbitrary fashion. A word must be said about these assumptions.

Historical evidence is seldom compulsory. If the mind of the historian is set to deny the possibility of this or that occurrence, he can generally find a plausible method of explaining it away. Again, historical documents, such as proceed from eye-

witnesses or good authorities, are not infallible: they are constantly discrepant about details. And the Gospel documents are no exception. It was a calamity that verbal infallibility was ever claimed for them. As St. Luke's preface shows, the evangelists make no claim to such infallibility. St. Luke and St. Matthew use St. Mark's narrative and correct it. St. John corrects all the others. They plainly regarded one another's narratives as authentic but not infallible. There are then discrepancies in detail: but such discrepancies in his documents do not justify the modern historian in rewriting history in a sense alien to all of them. As the famous preacher of antiquity, John Chrysostom, said, "They do not touch the main points." The figure in all the Gospels is the same, human and divine—the Son of Man and the Son of God—natural and supernatural or miraculous. If, like so many modern historians, we find ourselves compelled to deny the possibility of the occurrence in history of what is miraculous or supernatural—the manifesting of the Divine Saviour or Redeemer, at the climax of a long and gradual self-disclosure of God—we are bound to do violence to the Gospels, which are full of this conviction. Hence it is that modern descriptions of Jesus written from the naturalistic or purely humanitarian point of view are so contradictory. The humanitarian Christs of Renan and Harnack, different as they are, resemble one another. They have the common character which is called "Liberal Protestant." But they differ strangely from the

representations of Schweitzer and of the Apocalyptic School, for whom Jesus of Nazareth is the visionary prophet, fanatical and self-deluded from the start. The fact is that the denial of the superhuman in the man Christ Jesus cuts so deep into the representations of all the Gospels, and the assumption of all the New Testament documents, that those who approach the Gospels in this spirit can only regard them—however early they may be, or however authentically embodying the testimony of eyewitnesses—as substantially false—records of facts no doubt, but facts perverted by an enthusiasm which thought it saw or heard what in fact it only imagined. And it will depend upon the very fallible sense of probability in the modern critic what he will retain from the documents and what he will ignore or contradict. Rationalistic critics have been very severe on Renan for his arbitrariness and his romantic imaginativeness; but they themselves live in glass houses and should not throw stones.

Those of us who do not share the a priori assumption against the possibility of the miraculous or superhuman appearing in history, rejoice to acknowledge that on the side of physical science there is apparent in our days a very widespread weakening of the dogmatic repudiation of the miraculous. The Cambridge mathematician, Professor E. W. Hobson, in his admirable *Survey of the Domain of Natural Science*, has gone so far as to declare that "if the impossibility [of the occurrence of miracles] has been sometimes asserted by the exponents of

Natural Science, the assertion is merely a piece of a priori dogmatism, quite incapable of substantiation on scientific grounds"; and a great many similar concessions from the side of science can be quoted from recent books. Science, in fact, is much more open-minded than is commonly supposed. The number of scientific men of first-rate eminence who are also devout believers is more considerable than popular estimates reckon it to be. Such men find no conflict, only a difference of basis, between their religious faith and their scientific conclusions. And there are first-rate historians who are also believers, because their philosophy of history or their sense of what is probable or possible is different from that of their dogmatically incredulous brethren.

We would say then to the would-be student of the Gospels—Approach them as you would approach other records which come from trustworthy witnesses or witnesses who had every opportunity of being trustworthy. Approach them with open minds: minds, that is, not closed to the belief in a God who can reveal Himself to men. Look round at the world and recognise that, if there is indeed, behind it and within, a Creative Spirit whose purpose is good, then the world as we experience it must present a parody of the Divine intention due to the perversity of His creatures; it must be a world sorely in need of redemption. Do not then approach the Gospels with a mind closed to the possibility of a Divine Redeemer. It is, of course,

true that as you read history you will find how common it has been for the imagination of men to clothe the persons of its heroes and saints with the garment of miracles: and the evidence for alleged miracles is commonly unsatisfactory or negligible: but you will not be so illogical as to let yourself conclude that this shuts out the possibility of there being any which are well-witnessed and authentic. Then if you are open-minded on this point, and go on to compare the records of miracle-workers all the world over with the record of Jesus, you will find the latter singularly distinctive in its evidential basis and its moral and intellectual appeal. Jesus is almost as unlike as possible to the normal workers of signs from Heaven. You will find, no doubt, discrepancies in the Gospels, and some material which seems to be of a lower level than the rest: but this will not scandalise you more in the Gospels than in other histories. It is the same figure who is presented in all the first three Gospels, and also, with some notable differences of emphasis, in the fourth. You will find yourself face to face in all of them with the same challenging person speaking in a tone of infallible authority as He gives His message of good tidings about God and about man and the Kingdom of God to come on earth. In science He seems to make no claim to transcend the knowledge of His time. But about God and about man, he seems to speak for all men and all time with an authority which everyone who heard Him felt, and to which His disciples gladly

submitted themselves—a delegated but absolute authority like that which the centurion, a heathen observer, had recognised in Him in His relation to nature. Under the strain of His seeming failure, deepening to the Cross, the faith of the first disciples breaks for the moment, as the Gospels faithfully record, but it is recovered in the experience of His resurrection, and stands henceforth upon a rock of invincible assurance. You will not find yourself easily able to get away from this figure of Jesus, or to turn your back upon it, or to treat Him as only one fallible prophet among many. Perhaps you will go on to discover that the only legitimate interpretation of this person and His mission is that which you find in St. Paul and St. John. At any rate you will find it hard to deny that the evidence of the documents supports this interpretation, and that it is those who refuse rather than those who affirm it who do violence to the evidence.

In Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, though the Gospels are declared to be authentic sources, you will find a very different story, in many respects, from that of the Gospels. The critics, orthodox or rationalist, have pointed out its defects from the side of strict history. Among the salient criticisms some must be noticed—The idyllic account of Galilee and of the early Galilean mission of Jesus is greatly exaggerated. The brilliant colours in which it is painted are due to the favourable impression made upon the imagination of Renan by his famous visit of 1860–1. Renan's account of Galilee and its

inhabitants contrasts strangely, for instance, with that lately given by the learned and critical Jew, Joseph Klausner, in his *Jesus of Nazareth*—The suggestion of an evangelistic activity of Jesus before He made acquaintance with John the Baptist is purely imaginary—Renan has a most unfortunate habit of selecting events from the Gospels, which are there presented as singular or unique, such as the Transfiguration or the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and generalising from them as to what were, or were said to be, the common habits of Jesus—His idea of Jesus, as having, at a certain stage, "completely lost his Jewish faith" and made a complete breach with Judaism, is wholly contrary to all the evidence we have—The ascription to Him of a reluctant connivance, more and more forced upon Him, in pretensions made on His behalf by over-zealous followers and even in fraudulent miracles, is gratuitous. No leader ever appears to have been so little influenced by those who surrounded Him, whether by His own family, or His disciples or the crowd—There is no ground for ascribing to Him a lapse into miserable doubt in Gethsemane and a recovery of His real self before the final trial. The agony in the garden is wholly of a piece with the great question asked upon the Cross—The importance assigned to Mary Magdalene as the creator by her loving credulity of the faith of Christendom is fantastic—The selection of incidents or sayings of Jesus to be accepted without any expression of uncertainty, or to be rejected,

or to be mentioned as possible, is throughout the narrative of Renan obviously arbitrary.

One of Renan's admirers, Jean Pommier, who has recently written on his "Religious Thought," makes no concealment of Renan's inconsistency. He lets us see that his deliberate repudiation of any God other than nature and man, a repudiation based upon the rigid definitions of the scientific world of his day, left no solid ground for the kind of emotional religion or idealism in the interest of which the *Life of Jesus* appears to be written. He also points out that Renan did not seriously hold to his work as historical. It represents the high-water mark of his idealism. His mood changed. He made no reply to the violent attacks of the orthodox or the rather contemptuous patronage of the rationalist critics. But when he wrote the Preface to the thirteenth edition of the *Life* he declared that, if you were to confine yourself to certain facts of history, there was very little to be set down about Jesus. What he had written would stand, he suggested, as a picture of "one of the ways in which things might have happened." Really critical history, I dare to think, will lead us to believe that we have much more trustworthy information about Jesus than Renan's more thoroughgoing scepticism would suggest, and that what there is certain, or approaching to certainty, concerning Him does not, at many points, coincide with Renan's imaginative sketch. There was a book published two years after the celebrated *Life*, which had a great circula-

tion in its own country, though it never attained anything like the world-wide celebrity of Renan's, and which was the subject of almost as violent denunciation by some of the orthodox as Renan's book—I mean Seeley's *Ecce Homo*. That is, I believe, a book infinitely better able to claim to be historical, and really, as history, much more worthy of study. Nevertheless Renan's *Vie de Jésus* stands, and will, doubtless, continue to stand, as an exquisitely conceived and executed romance rather loosely or remotely based upon history.

THE FIVE IMAGES OF LOVE

By Grace Rhys

No one understands the nature of love; it is like a bird of heaven that sings a strange language. It lights down among us, coming from whence we know not, going we know not how or when, striking out wild notes of music that make even fatigued and heavy hearts to throb and give back a tone of courage.

The sorts and kinds of love are infinite in number, infinite as the days of the years of time. Each one of us is capable of many and various loves. We cannot love two creatures, not two dogs, with the same love. To each of those whom we love we offer a gem of different colour and value;—to the unknown Master of the heavens, ah! who shall tell of what sort is the love we offer to Him? Yet in this love, too (which is natural worship), we discover the same vibrational atmosphere that invades the soul of all lovers.

I doubt we shall not get much nearer to the nature of love by mere talking. Intellectual statements are of little use. God does not make intellectual statements, He creates. We have to find our way about in the vast medley of created

things that life spreads out around us, and pick up what bits of knowledge we can as we make our way along.

Let me choose five images that will give an idea of what the awaking of this new life means.

I. Shall we not say that the creature without love is like the lamp unlit? There it is, and no one needs it. But touch it with flame, and it trembles and glows and becomes the centre of the room where it stands. Everything that falls under its rays is new-gilt. So does the lover see all natural things quite new.

II. Or take the image of the withering plant that is dying of drought. The sun's rays have parched it; the roots have searched and searched for moisture in a soil that grows every day harder and drier. The plant wilts and hangs its head; it is fainting and ready to die, when down comes the rain in a murmuring multitude of round scented drops, the purest thing alive, a distilled essence, necessary to life. Under that baptism the plant lifts itself up; it drinks and rejoices. In the night it renews its strength; in the morning the heat it has had from the sun, reinforced by the rain, bursts out into coloured flowers. So I have known a man battered by hard life and the excess of his own passions: I have seen love come to such a man and take him up and cleanse him and set him on his feet; and from him has burst forth a flood of colour and splendour—creative work that now lends its fiery stimulus to thousands.

III. Another image might be of the harp that stands by itself in golden aloofness. Then come the beautiful arms, the curving fingers that pluck at the strings, and the air is filled with melody; the harp begins to live, thrilling and rejoicing, down to its golden foot.

IV. Or picture the unlighted house, empty at fall of night. The windows are dark; the door shut; the clean wind goes about and about it, and cannot find an entrance. The dull heavy air is faint within; it longs to be reunited to the wind of the world outside. Then comes the woman with the key, and in she steps; the windows are opened, the imprisoned air rushes out, the wind enters; the lamps and the fire are lit; so that light fills windows and doors. The tables are set, there is the sound of footsteps; and more footsteps. The house glows and lives.

One could please oneself by many more images; such as the white garment of feathers that the young swans put on in the spring: the young flowers opening out their cups to the Sun that fills them with his golden wine. All life is full of such images, because nature has ruled that love, energy, beauty, and joy are one.

V. A last image only I would like to add because of the pleasure it has given me. On the north door of the Cathedral of Chartres there is a sculptured design, some six hundred years old, of God creating the birds. God is charming, quite young, not more than thirty-eight or so; He has a most sweet expression. Behind Him a little

stands the Son, about seventeen, tall as He and very like Him, but beardless. He has the same sweetness of look, as though upon each countenance an ineffable smile were just dawning. The Father is holding something that time has broken in His hand; most likely it is a bird. What a fortunate moment! What a fortunate thought! No wonder they both look pleased. Never have the birds disappointed Him as have we, His ruder children. Every spring since then these small creatures praise Him, head turned skywards, for the joy of the beloved, for the secret nest.

Imagining and pondering, one is apt to grow a little wise; now perhaps we may say that love is a radiant atmosphere of the soul, a celestial energy, a fluid force.

This force, this energy is set running in the wide kingdom that is within us by some Spirit touch. A soft tumult takes place in the life within; waves on waves of joy, desire, grief, ecstasy begin to run, making a trembling music that often causes the whole body to shake and tremble too.

I am in love with love; I do adore it;—from the smile on that rough fellow's face as he talks to his dog, to the ardours of a St. Francis or a Joan of Arc. That bright creative flame, winged, conferring the gift of tongues, master of all music, of all joy, is the best thing we have of life.

THE SOCIAL STATE

THE RECREATIONS OF THE SPITAL-FIELDS WEAVERS

By Edmond G. A. Holmes

I am told that somewhere on this planet of ours there is a fastidious professor who holds that the lower orders (as we call them) ought to be kept in a state of semi-serfdom, in order that the upper classes may have leisure for culture. If this paradoxical theory were put forward as a paradox there might be something to be said for it; at any rate one might treat it as a joke and pass it by with a smile; but I understand that it is put forward in all seriousness; and, this being so, I propose to subject it to serious criticism; and I do so the more readily because in our fastidious professor I recognise one of my own dead selves.

The first and most obvious objection to this thesis is that the enslavement, or semi-enslavement, of the lower orders is too high a price to pay for any end, however intrinsically desirable.

A second and almost equally obvious objection is that if culture demands for its advancement the permanent degradation of seven-eighths of the human race, in the very act of making this claim

it proves that its estimate of its own worth is unduly high. For if the effect of culture on the cultured is to make them so callously selfish that they will accept with complacence the sacrifice to their supposed interests of the well-being of the masses —their comfort, their leisure and their economic freedom—it is most emphatically *not* the humanising influence which it pretends to be.

A third objection to the theory is that it stultifies its own *raison d'être*. For what is the meaning, what is the value of culture? Is it a precious possession, the mere existence of which exalts and enriches the human race? Surely not. Surely it must be used and enjoyed, surely we must feed upon it in our hearts, if its potential value is to be converted into actual value. But if seven-eighths of the human race are to be forbidden to enjoy it, if they are to be denied the education and the leisure which might enable them to enjoy it, of what value will it be when produced? Of what value is culture if it is to be reserved exclusively for the delectation of a clique of connoisseurs and dilettantists, with a band of scholars and a few men of creative genius scattered among these, and is not to enlighten and elevate the mass of mankind?

A fourth objection, the most serious of all from our professor's point of view, is that the theory defeats its own avowed aim; that, if carried out, it would make for the degradation, not for the advancement of culture. For culture, like a mountain, should be broad-based if it is to rise to a lofty

height; but, according to the theory which I am examining, it is of the essence of culture that it should have a narrow base, that it should be an Eiffel Tower or a sky-scraper, not a Mont Blanc. The great mountain, as Ruskin has well said, lifts the lowlands on to its sides. It is only by lifting the lowlands, by using them as the lower courses of its own structure, that it has been able to rise so high above them. The Eiffel Tower spurned the lowlands. It tried to take a short cut to heaven. But because it had made no attempt to identify itself with the lowlands or to incorporate them in its own structure, it failed ignominiously and had to be cut off, lest it should topple over, when it had reached the level of one of the humblest of Nature's hills. An eminent musician once told me that the folk songs, the songs of the people, are the lifted lowlands out of which the great creations of musical genius soar up to the sky. The ballads of a nation are the lifted lowlands of its poetry. When Gothic Architecture was at the zenith of its achievement, it had behind it, not only the religious faith of the people but also their instinctive art, as expressed in their own handicrafts, and their practical skill.

I shall be reminded that the marvellous culture of Ancient Athens rested on a basis of slave labour. This argument has been overworked by the advocates of an exclusively aristocratic culture. Athenian culture rested on a basis of slave labour in the sense in which the whole Athenian commonwealth

rested on that basis. But to rest on a basis is one thing; to be rooted in it is another. Slaves in antiquity, especially in urban areas, played to a large extent the part which is played to-day by the mechanical contrivances which supply us with water, light, heat, power, drainage and transport, and which count for so much in our social life, that modern culture may almost be said to rest on a basis of applied science and organised machinery. That is why the number of slaves was so large in proportion to the number of enfranchised citizens. The slaves were not, as are our lower orders, an integral part of the social community. Athenian culture may have rested on a basis of slave labour, but it was rooted in the intelligence and good taste of the Athenian *demos*—a *demos* which could listen, with critical appreciation, to the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides and gaze, with critical appreciation, on the works of Phidias and Praxiteles. "The whole Athenian nation," says Lewes in his *Life of Goethe*, "co-operated with its artists; and this is one cause why Athenian art rose into unsurpassed splendour. Art was not the occupation of a few, ministering to the luxury of a few; it was the luxury of all. Its triumphs were not hidden in galleries and museums; they blazed in the noonday sun; they were admired and criticised by the whole people; and, as Aristotle expressly says, every free citizen was from youth upwards a critic of art." In other words, Athenian culture soared high because, within the limits of the social

community, it was broad-based, as broad-based as it was possible for it to be.

When enjoyment of art is a pleasure which the connoisseur keeps to himself, the art in question, or at least that particular development of it, has begun to die, suffocated by its own technique. When the collector appears on the scene the art in question is dead. The intrusion of selfish exclusiveness into art is a sign of incipient decay. For its presence means that the artist has succumbed to the lure of finality and forgotten the call of the infinite, which was his inspiration when his art was young. What the connoisseur enjoys, what the collector prides himself on possessing, is something finished and finite, something which can be weighed and measured, and valued at last in terms of £ s. d. When an art is living and growing, when it is advancing towards its meridian, joy in it is "joy in widest commonalty spread." True art is an adventure into the infinite. As such it ministers to all, appeals to all, and calls for the devotion and service of all.

Our professor will tell us that the masses have no culture and care nothing for it. This may be so to-day. But was it always so? In the Middle Ages and in the earlier of the centuries which we call Modern, the masses, though uneducated and ignorant, had a primitive culture of their own. They had their ballads, their folk songs, their village plays, their morris and other dances, their cottage architecture, their various handicrafts. They

have lost most of these. Let this be fully admitted. But how did they lose them, and who is responsible for the loss? Not the losers themselves. They have been the victims of adverse fate. They have been forcibly decultured, if I may use such a word. But when was this tragedy enacted, and how did it come to pass?

In answer to this question I will tell the story of the Spitalfields Weavers. When I have told it I shall be able to formulate a final objection to our professor's proposal to base the culture of his nation on the virtual enslavement of seven-eighths of its inhabitants. The professor is not alone in the low estimate of his fellow-men which is implicit in his cynical proposal. There is a widespread impression among the upper classes, especially among the persons who pride themselves on their culture, that the working classes have a congenital incapacity for making a profitable use of leisure, and that the shortened hours of work which are now the rule in most industries, will thus be disadvantageous to them as well as to their employers, and that therefore in their own interest as well as in the interest of the whole community they should revert to the longer hours which were usual before and during the war. There is no ground for this ultra-pessimistic assumption. Whippet racing, pigeon fancying, attending football matches, gambling and drinking are not ideal forms of recreation. But if the workers in this and other countries have lost the art of employing leisure, their loss is easily

accounted for, and there is no reason why they should not recover what they have lost.

Let us go back a hundred years or so to the days before the poisonous harvest which the Industrial Revolution sowed had fully ripened. From A.D. 1769 to 1824 the wages of the Spitalfields silk weavers were fixed under an Act of Parliament, by the Lord Mayor, Recorder and Aldermen of London, and masters who paid lower or higher wages were liable to a fine of £50. Taking one year with another the wages were high enough to enable the weavers to live in decent comfort and enjoy a reasonable amount of leisure. What use did they make of their leisure? What use were the leisured members of the upper classes at that time making of their super-abundant leisure? For the most part they were engaged in gambling, duelling, dancing, swaggering about at fashionable resorts, hunting, shooting, horse-racing, cock-fighting, illicit love-making, and hard drinking. The recreative activities of the Spitalfields weavers were of a different order from these. An interesting picture of their varied interests was given in 1840 by Edward Church, a solicitor, who had lived for thirty years among them in Spital Square. Of those thirty years, fourteen preceded and sixteen followed the repeal of the Wages Act. The Act applied to London only; and during the whole period from 1810 to 1840 the competition with the London silk industry of the labour-sweating, *rate-aided* silk industries in provincial towns was making itself increasingly felt.

After the repeal of the Act the wages of the Spitalfields weavers fell so low that in order to live they had to work increasingly long hours. Hence the gradual decay of the various societies for mutual instruction and recreation which they had formed. Church describes these societies in the following words:

> The *Spitalfields Mathematical Society* is second in time to the Royal Society and still exists. There was an *Historical Society* which was merged in the *Mathematical Society*. There was a *Flori-cultural Society*, very numerously attended, but now extinct. The weavers were almost the only botanists of their day in the metropolis. They passed their leisure hours, and generally the whole family dined on Sundays, at the little gardens in the environs of London, now mostly built upon, in small rooms about the size of modern omnibuses [1840] with a fireplace at the end. There was an *Entomological Society*, and they were the first entomologists in the kingdom. The Society is gone. They had a *Recitation Society* for Shakespearean readings, as well as reading other authors, which is almost forgotten. They had a *Musical Society*, but this is also gone. They had a *Columbarian Society*, which gave a silver medal as a prize for the best pigeons of the fancy breed. They were great bird-fanciers, and breeders of canaries, many of whom now cheer their quiet hours while at the loom. Their breed of spaniels called Splashers were of the best sporting blood . . . Many of the weavers were Freemasons, but there are now very few left, and these old men. Many of the houses in Spitalfields had porticos with seats at their doors, where the weavers might be seen on summer evenings enjoying their pipes. The porticos have given way to improvements of the pavements.

An idyllic picture this, but as pathetic as it is idyllic. The gradual decay of the once flourishing

societies under the inexorable pressure of falling wages and lengthening hours of work, was a veritable tragedy. But the fight of the weavers against adverse fate was not in vain. For in the course of it they showed what the working classes were able to do in the way of recreation and self-education when they had decent wages *and leisure*. In the pre-factory days, when weaving and other industries were carried on in the homes of the workers, the combination of decent wages with leisure was by no means rare. Those who have studied the social and economic life of the eighteenth century tell us that in that age of transition something of the primitive but genuine culture which the lower orders had evolved in the Middle Ages lingered on in the rural and the industrial villages. The freeholders in the former and the homeworkers in the latter, being to some extent their own masters and therefore able to regulate their working hours, still had their folk songs and their morris dances, and could do many things with their hands which they cannot do now. It was in the soil of that primitive culture that the splendid initiative of the Spitalfields weavers may have had its roots. Then came the Industrial Revolution, accompanied in the rural districts by the enclosure of the Common Lands, and in the world of ideas by the rise of political economy, which taught, or was understood to teach, that labour was a commodity to be bought in the cheapest and sold in the dearest market. The joint action of these three movements

reduced the working classes to a state of serfdom and semi-starvation. Wages fell so low that in order to keep body and soul together the labourers, both in town and country, *and their children,* had to work from thirteen to fifteen hours a day. Having no leisure they naturally lost the art of making a profitable use of leisure. Then, to make matters worse, came a wave of puritanical Evangelicalism which swept over the country and carried with it the notion (much favoured by the employers of labour) that all recreation, at any rate on the part of the working classes, was "carnal," and that the harder the poor worked and the less they enjoyed life, the more likely they were to be "saved." At last things came to such a pass that the public-house became the only place of recreation, and drinking the only distraction from the monotony of never-ending and ill-paid toil.

The workers now have reasonably high wages and a fair amount of leisure. What use will they make of the latter? It is possible that at first they will go in with redoubled energy for their favourite amusements — whippet-racing, pigeon fancying, football matches and the rest. And they will probably give more time to gardening, which has, I believe, always attracted them whenever allotments were available. But the need for a higher and wider range of activities will gradually make itself felt. If the workers cannot at once rise to the level of the Spitalfields weavers, the upper classes, who either robbed them of their leisure or

acquiesced—with pious resignation—in the robbery, must bear the blame of this. The Spitalfields weavers have given a lead to the workers of to-day, which they will not fail to follow, especially if they have been allowed to have varied interests in their elementary schools, and encouraged to form societies for mutual improvement and amusement in their continuation schools.

For, be it carefully observed, whatever the weavers did in the way of self-education and rational recreation, they did for themselves. There was no one to help them. There was no Board of Education to provide them in their early years with schools and teachers. There were no earnest philanthropists to guide them, when they grew up, into the path of self-development. They sought and found that path for themselves, and they had travelled far along it when loss of leisure, enforced by the threat of starvation, compelled them to quit it. Perhaps one reason why they had travelled so far was that they had found the path and explored it for themselves. Their initiative had not been starved in childhood by a repressive education which left them no room for independent action. And what survived of it had not been extinguished in adult life by that well-meaning but fussy and over-officious philanthropy which postulates the helplessness of the lower orders and then does its best to make them helpless. There is a moral to all this which is so obvious that I will ask the members of this conference to draw it for themselves.

I am perhaps looking far into the future when I say that the workers, when leisure has lost its novelty for them, the novelty which tempts them to misuse it, will follow the lead which the Spitalfields weavers gave a hundred years ago. But I am confident that the time of which I dream will come at last. For, above all, the weavers, now that the story of their doings has been given to the world, have killed the wicked superstition that the working classes have a congenital disinclination and incapacity for self-improvement. They have killed this superstition by proving that it is a superstition, and nothing more. And there was need for it to be killed. When the "masters" in town and country—the millowners, the squires and the farmers—had done their best to debase and brutalise their labourers by persistently over-working and under-paying them, they and the rest of the upper classes—male and female, lay and clerical—had the effrontery to say that the social order, *as it existed then*, had been ordained by God, and in the strength of this self-flattering assumption they turned round upon the victims of their own rapacity and cruelty, and said (as some of them still say) that they were (and are) base-born brutes.

No, the lower strata of society are no more base-born than the higher. Their natural ability is as great. So is their latent capacity for self-sacrifice and disinterested devotion. I do not say that all men are born equal in these respects. I am very sure that they are all born unequal. But I do say

most emphatically that we have no evidence that there is any natural inequality between class and class. Professor Cizek, the Viennese art master, the work of whose youthful pupils, now being exhibited in this country and in this town, has astonished and delighted all who have seen it, told one of his interviewers that his best pupils come from the "proletariat": "I would rather have the proletariat child—I would much rather. He has more 'attack' and is less spoiled." In some of our schools original composition in prose and verse is now encouraged by the teachers; and the response which the children are making to this appeal to their creative impulse is on the whole surprisingly good. But the best compositions that I have yet seen come from a higher standard *elementary* school in Yorkshire. And this was not picked work. What was remarkable in that school, as in Professor Cizek's art class, was the extraordinary high level of attainment which the *average* child reached. In each case capacity had been liberated by the skill and sympathy of the teacher,—capacity, the existence of which would have remained unsuspected, had not the teacher, in Professor Cizek's words, taken the lid off instead of clapping it on.

This leads me to state the fifth and last objection to our professor's theory, an objection which is a corollary to and in some sort a restatement of the fourth. Our professor has taken for granted that the masses have a congenital distaste for culture. If I am not mistaken, he has also taken for granted

that they have a congenital incapacity for it. Indeed it is only by adding this assumption to the other that he can attempt to justify his theory. But the second assumption is as baseless as the first. There is reason to believe that the masses, in proportion to their numbers, are by nature as well able to enjoy and appreciate culture as are the more leisured classes, and also as well able to produce and diffuse it; in other words, that they are by nature as well endowed with taste, with talent and, above all, with creative genius. If I cannot prove this statement, I can at least defy its critics to disprove it. There is evidence in support of it. The results of the experiments of Professor Cizek and the gifted teacher of English—experiments which do not stand alone—raise a presumption in its favour. So does the long list of men in all lands and all ages who have risen to greatness in defiance of the many disadvantages of obscure and lowly birth. And the evidence that seems to tell against it is wholly inconclusive, comparison between social stratum and stratum, as regards capacity for culture, being impossible when the facilities for acquiring it are glaringly unequal.

But if the natural capacity of the masses is equal, or even approximately equal, to that of the classes, the loss to culture, owing to its being to a large extent beyond the reach of the former, must be very great. And if our professor could have his way, the loss would be greater still. The masses are perhaps seven times as numerous as the classes.

It follows that if all men, without distinction of class, from the hour of their birth, could have equal opportunities for self-development, we might have eight times as many poets, artists, men of letters, thinkers, historians, pioneers in science, etc., as we have now. And the broader this high plateau of culture, the higher, one might hope, would be the peaks that rose from it as their base.

It is in respect of their social, not of their proto-plasmic heritage, of the circumstances of birth, not of birth itself, that the lower classes are less fortunate than the upper. They are born into an environment which is as a rule narrower, ruder, more cramping, more depressing, less stimulating, less inspiring, an environment which cuts them off, in no small measure, from the world's great tradition of art, of letters, of high thinking, of refined and gentle living; an environment which can scarcely fail to stamp its own defects, both positive and negative, on their impressionable hearts during childhood and adolescence. It is for education, first of the child and then of the adolescent, to redress this inequality by giving those who have been less fortunate in their start in life opportunities for all-round self-development. It is for education to lift the average level of the lower social strata, in respect of culture, to the average level of the higher. It is for education to do this, and then to do something more than this. The differences between stratum and stratum in respect of culture (in the true and deep sense of the word) are as

nothing compared with the differences in this respect between man as he is and man as he might be. To lead the whole human race, without respect to class, in the direction of its own ideal, is the noblest task that education can set itself. And it is a task which education alone can undertake with any hope of success

ROBERT OWEN

By G. D. H. Cole

Robert Owen, shop-boy and manufacturer, factory reformer and educationist, Socialist and Co-operative pioneer, Trade Union leader and secularist, founder of ideal communities and practical man of business, was something of a puzzle to his own generation, and is no less a puzzle to posterity. Surely no man ever founded so many movements, and yet had so simple and unvarying a body of ideas. Surely no man was ever at once so practical and so visionary, so lovable and so impossible to work with, so laughed at and yet so influential. And there are few men who are so much talked about, and whose works are so little read.

There is a reason for this. Owen wrote voluminously, and often ill. He lived to be eighty-seven, and he was writing steadily up to the last weeks of his life. But of his later works, which make up the great bulk of his writings, by far the larger part is valueless. Owen said what he had to say in his earlier books; his later works are merely more and more elaborate and prosy repetitions of his better

writings. There is but one exception: his Life of himself, of which he completed only a first volume, is delightfully fresh and attractive—the best and most readable of all his books, though it was published in his eighty-sixth year, which gives Owen's own version of the circumstances which attended the issue of his earlier works.

With this one exception, all Owen's later works can be disregarded, except by the specialist. Indeed, that volume, slender as it is, contains all the best of Owen's writings with the exception of his unfinished Autobiography. And all the essays were issued within a space of eight years. The opening essay of the *New View of Society* appeared in 1813, and the *Report to the County of Lanark* in 1821. In these eight years Robert Owen made his essential contribution to human knowledge. And, incidentally, out of his work during these years arose in Great Britain the two great movements of Socialism and Co-operation.

In order to understand Owen's doctrines aright, it is necessary to know something both of the man himself and of the circumstances in which his ideas were developed. Owen was born in 1771, and the years of his manhood coincided with the most critical years of the great social change which we call the "Industrial Revolution." And his doctrines were above all designed as answers to the vast social and economic problems which the Industrial Revolution had raised up.

Let us begin with the man himself. Robert Owen

was born in 1771 in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, a remote district of Central Wales. His father was a saddler and ironmonger, and also the local post-master. He was a weakly boy, much given to introspection, but intelligent beyond his fellows. He was only seven years old when he became a sort of pupil-teacher in the local school. At nine, he left school and began work as shop-boy in a neighbour's shop. At ten, after a brief visit to London, he was apprenticed to a draper in good business at Stamford in Lincolnshire. There he remained three years, and then became assistant at a draper's in London. A year later he migrated to Manchester, and for four years was assistant there in a good drapery house. Then, at eighteen, his chance came, and the boy set up in business for himself.

Manchester, which was to be the scene of Owen's first considerable successes, was then at the height of a great and rapid industrial transformation. The great inventions of Hargreaves, Arkwright and Crompton were in process of revolutionising the methods of cotton manufacture, and new factories for preparing, roving and spinning the cotton were springing up right and left. It was a time when great fortunes were to be made by the fortunate and the adventurous; and young Owen seized his chance. He began business for himself, with a borrowed hundred pounds, in partnership with a mechanic who knew how to make certain of the new machines. Before long his partner left him, in search of a

better-equipped colleague, and Owen was left on his own. No longer able to make machines, he set out to use those which remained in his hands. He succeeded; but within a few months a better chance came his way. The position of manager to one of the largest and best-equipped spinning mills in Lancashire fell vacant, and Owen, still under twenty, was appointed, at a salary of three hundred a year—a handsome remuneration in those days. At twenty he found himself in full charge of a factory in which five hundred workers were employed.

Again Owen made good. The products of his factory became well known for excellence in the trade, not only in Manchester but as far away as Glasgow. His employer, a Mr. Drinkwater, offered him a partnership; but difficulties arose, and instead Owen entered into partnership with two younger men who were starting a new company for the manufacture of yarn. He remained for some years in sole control of the new mill, and then on behalf of his company acquired from David Dale, whose daughter he soon afterwards married, the famous New Lanark Mills, the largest and best equipped spinning mills in Scotland.

This bald summary does far less than justice to the romance of Owen's early career. Every episode in it was an adventure, through which he climbed steadily to a further success. At twenty-eight, when he became managing partner in the New Lanark establishment, Owen was already a wealthy

manufacturer according to the standards of the times, and bade fair to be before long very wealthy indeed.

Owen was by now well known as a successful business man; but, beyond a small circle of friends, that was his only claim to distinction. He had, indeed, as a leading member of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, given utterance to some peculiar opinions on the subject of religion and the formation of character; but these did not appear to possess any special significance in relation to his business. Only when he was established at New Lanark did it appear that he was aiming at something very much bigger than mere money-making or business success.

Owen remained at New Lanark for more than a quarter of a century. He made of it not only a most successful commercial establishment, but a show place which visitors came from all over the world to see. Through all the successive partnerships in which he was associated—and he quarrelled with each group of partners in turn because they would not give him full freedom to follow out his ideas—he aimed at making New Lanark, not merely an efficient factory, but a well-governed human community based on his ideals. The manufacturer of those days—especially when his factory stood in an isolated place—had a tremendous hold over his employees. The houses in which they lived, the shops at which they bought their provisions, the entire village as well as the factory belonged to

the employer, who gathered together his force of labourers from far and near, and could rule over them as a benevolent or malevolent despot. Owen had a high idea of the duties which this vast power entailed. In his view, the employer had no right merely to treat his employees as a means to profit. It was his duty to ensure to them all the means of good living—to pay good wages, to avoid unreasonably long hours of work, to provide good houses and good food and clothing at reasonable prices, to make the factory village a sanitary and a pleasant place, and, above all, to ensure to the children, whether employed in the factory or not, the best education that sympathy and knowledge could place at their command. In his later partnerships, when he was in a position to make his own terms, Owen strictly limited the reward of capital to a fixed amount, and insisted that all surplus profits should be applied to the provision of communal services on the employees' behalf.

At New Lanark, Owen paid better wages, worked shorter hours, and gave infinitely better conditions than most of his competitors. He abolished all "pauper apprentice" labour immediately on assuming control, and refused to employ children at less than ten years of age when others were freely working them intolerably long hours at less than six years old. And yet he had no difficulty in making the factory pay, despite the large sums he was constantly spending on all manner of improvements and amenities. In short, he gave an astonish-

ingly convincing demonstration of what later generations have called the "economy of high wages," at a time when appalling under-payment and over-work were almost everywhere regarded as the indispensable conditions of commercial success.

The earlier writings, such as, for example, the *New View of Society* and the *Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark*, reflect this phase of Owen's career. And they make it clear that there was already a quite definite theory behind his activities. He did what he did because he believed that in no other way could the foundations of a reasonable social order be truly laid. His main purpose, he insisted throughout, was educational. There was no way of making good citizens except by educating men and women so as to make them such. And there was no way of so educating them save by providing an environment in which their better natures would be encouraged to grow, and body and mind together well cared for and trained in right habits and ways of living.

"Man's character is made for, and not by, him," Owen was never weary of proclaiming; and his whole system at New Lanark was based on this belief. What appalled him about the new "manufacturing system" was not only its inhumanity, but also that it seemed to him to result in a perversion of the characters of those who were subjected to its rule. What chance had the child, forced into the factory at a tender age and there remorselessly compelled to labour under a rigid discipline for the profit

of others, of becoming a good citizen? What sort of civic virtues was the rule of unlimited competition and "devil take the hindmost" likely to breed up in both master and man? The child should not labour at all until it had been thoroughly grounded by education in right social principles. When it did go to work, the labour must be suited to its years, and animated by a social, instead of a competitive, motive. And education, while it must begin with the child, must not stop with the child: it must continue throughout life. Above all, a man's occupation has so strong an influence on his character that, if the factory is wrongly organised so as to appeal to the wrong motives in men, the whole of society will be poisoned by it.

We may think that, in the *New View of Society*, Owen pushed this view of the effect of environment on character too far. But it can hardly be disputed that, in the circumstances of his own time, his insistence on it was wholly salutary. Owen's contemporaries were for the most part acting on very different principles—treating the acquisition of wealth as the highest good, and justifying the most ruthless exploitation of labour by an appeal to that standard. By insisting that the acquisition of wealth on such terms might mean the destruction of men, Owen put forward a different ideal, and became the pioneer of new views both of education and of factory management.

By common consent, the schools at New Lanark were pronounced the outstanding success of that

astonishing factory. Both in ideas of education and in their practical working out Owen was far ahead of his time. He saw at once the inadequacy of the Lancaster monitorial system, and insisted that the first aim of education must be not to cram the memory but to equip the mind. He realised the limitations of books, especially in their appeal to the younger children, and the place of dancing, of physical exercises, of appeals to eye and ear in any rational system of education. He trained his own teachers in his own methods, and raised up a host of disciples to his faith. And, above all, he realised that a tired mind cannot learn, and that long hours of toil are incompatible with the making of good citizens.

In all his work at New Lanark Owen was doubtless very much the benevolent autocrat, whose word all men in his village were bound to obey. And, as he came to wish to apply his doctrines over a sphere wider than his own factory, he began to visualise a world made in the image of New Lanark. He had done wonders. Why should not others do as much? His employees were orderly, prosperous and happy. Why should other employers complain of the turbulence, laziness, drunkenness of their workers? Why should there be so much misery in the world? Need there be any misery at all, if the world would but follow his example?

So Owen became gradually the leader of a crusade. For more than twelve years after his coming to New Lanark he worked away quietly,

testing his theories and gradually proving their soundness. Then he set to work to convert others. His *New View of Society* was his first effort at propaganda of his views. For it seemed to him that if he could but convince the world of his doctrine concerning the formation of character, everything else would follow as a matter of course. If the world knew that "man's character is formed for, and not by, him," it would cease to blame the poor for being what they were, and would set out to provide an environment in which they would speedily become, as the workers at New Lanark had become under his guidance, industrious, prosperous, good and happy. It would cease to blame the poor for their condition, and would take the obvious steps necessary to improve it.

Side by side with this wider crusade, Owen set on foot another. He began to work hard for a Factory Act which would prohibit the labour of young children, regulate hours of work, and set up a State system of factory inspection. Owen is the great pioneer of the movement for factory reform. Principally to his initiative the first Factory Act—that of 1819—was due, though he repudiated it as falling far short of what he held to be both just and expedient.

Owen was engaged in this double crusade when the ending of the Napoleonic wars ushered in a period of intense unemployment and economic crisis. "On the day the peace was signed," he wrote, "the great customer of the producers died." Every-

where trade stagnated, thousands were flung out of work, wages came tumbling down. Soon there were throughout the country mutterings of discontent from the starving operatives; and before long the mutterings swelled to a mighty clamour. The workers were driven in masses to the Poor Law for support; and the parishes, appalled at the heavy rates, barely kept them from sheer mass starvation. The workers cried out for the Reform of Parliament as a means to the redress of their grievances; the Government, fearing revolution, retaliated with the "Peterloo" massacre, the Six Acts of 1819, and a general campaign of repression.

To Owen, meanwhile, it seemed as if the world had gone mad. He had no belief in political reform as a means to the remedying of economic grievances; but the repression of the workers seemed to him utterly beside the point. The thing to do was to remove the causes of distress, instead of tinkering with its effects. As early as 1816 he developed, with this end in view, the first outline of his famous "Plan," the germ of Socialism and of Co-operation, but in its first inception essentially a practical scheme for relieving the economic distress of the years immediately after 1815.

The gist of Owen's plan can be very shortly stated. He proposed that, instead of paying out doles, the Government should employ the poor in "Villages of Co-operation" modelled on his own establishment at New Lanark and, like it, essentially centres of social life and rational education as well

as of productive activity. These "Villages," Owen suggested, should be in the main self-supporting. They should be agricultural as well as industrial, and should raise the produce needed for their own consumption, exchanging their surplus products of different kinds one with another. As they would be based on rational principles of education, they would not compete but co-operate one with another, and their aim would be as much to train good citizens as to relieve the necessities of the poor. If this were done, Owen argued, the need for poor rates would speedily disappear, and, by the same token, the foundations of a new and better social order for the whole community would speedily be laid.

This is the "Plan" which, with minor variations, is expounded in several of the writings, but most fully and maturely in the *Report to the County of Lanark.* As Owen expounded it, the conception of it broadened out in his mind. He began by preaching it as a cure for unemployment; but soon he was putting it forward as a complete and immediately practicable social Utopia, destined speedily to sweep away capitalism and the competitive system, and to inaugurate for all the world a new era of peace and brotherhood based on a rational idea of the formation and development of human character under the influence of environment. "Any character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even

to the world at large, by applying certain means, which are to a great extent at the command, and under the control, or easily made so, of those who possess the government of nations." So Owen had written in his *New View of Society*; and in his "Plan" he was proposing the actual means by which the great change might be brought about.

There was, at the outset, nothing "Radical" or democratic in Owen's conception. He appealed for its execution to the Tory Government and the Unreformed Parliament. He enlisted for a time the respectful interest of Lord Sidmouth, the Tory Home Secretary and noted prosecutor of Radicals, of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and of the Duke of Kent. David Ricardo and other noted economists sat on a committee pledged to further his "Plan." As the famous and successful manufacturer of New Lanark, he received a respectful hearing in high quarters. But it was one thing to listen, and another to act; and, as the cries of distress and anger among the poor grew louder, the Government and the Parliament turned more and more from considering ways of relieving distress to taking measures for the suppression of disturbance and riot. Owen found himself less and less respectfully received; he made up his mind to appeal from the Government to the general public.

This wider appeal is embodied in many of the Addresses and Manifestoes. In one of them occurs Owen's famous denunciation of all established religions as inveterate foes to the progress

of mankind. There was nothing particularly novel in this declaration, save its outspokenness. All the religions, Owen held, treated man as a responsible agent—responsible for his own misdoings, whereas his faults of character and his sins were really the products of his environment, and could be washed away by a better moral and physical education. Owen had been preaching this doctrine for years, though he had never before declared so plainly his hostility to the Churches. But it was largely as a stick wherewith to beat his growingly unpopular social doctrines that the remark was seized upon, and quoted against him in every accent of horrified surprise. Owen ceased suddenly to be respectable; and, though some of his highly placed friends stood by him for a time, yet from the date of this declaration his main appeal was made to the working class.

Indeed, it became clear within a few years that a section of the workers was almost alone in taking Owen seriously. For a time he had still a following among the middle and professional classes, and produced for their consumption successive elaborations of his "Plan," culminating in the famous *Report to the County of Lanark.* But gradually, in despair of seeing any practical outcome of his labours in Great Britain, he conceived the idea of trying out his schemes in the more congenial, because less contaminated, air of the New World. In 1824 Owen left for the United States, and there,

the following year, he founded the Co-operative Community of New Harmony.

The story of that failure has been often told. How the settlers, a motley band of enthusiasts and adventurers of every sort, fell out among themselves, how the parent community broke into several lesser communities, how finally the communal basis of settlement was given up, and New Harmony relapsed into a successful pioneer town based on individual tenure, and how Owen, having sunk his whole fortune in the venture, emerged poor but not discouraged from its collapse, cannot here be described. It is enough to say that in 1829 Owen returned to Great Britain to find that the face of the world had greatly changed in his absence.

For now Owenism had attracted a new body of disciples, and these were chiefly found among the most intelligent leaders of the working class. The Combination Acts had been repealed in 1824, and a rapid growth of Trade Unionism had immediately followed. The great political uprising which culminated in the Reform Act of 1832 was nearing its height; but the workers were organising for industrial protection as well as for political agitation. There had begun too among the workers a growth of little Co-operative Societies and stores for mutual trading, explicitly based on Owen's teaching, and regarding themselves as forerunners of purely working-class "Villages of Co-operation" to be founded when the surplus funds accumulated

through mutual trade grew large enough for so ambitious a venture.

After a momentary hesitation, Owen, who had by this time severed his connection with New Lanark and ceased to be an employer of labour, put himself at the head of the movement. All over the country his disciples set to work to bring the Trade Unions and other working-class bodies over to their way of thinking. John Doherty, the great Trade Union leader of the North and secretary of the Spinners, was a convinced Owenite. One after another, the Unions were converted: there was a rapid growth of Co-operative Stores, and many Unions set on foot Producers' Co-operative Societies of their own. In 1832 Owen founded the National Equitable Labour Exchange as a mart where Co-operative products could be exchanged on the basis of "labour time," in accordance with the principles laid down in the *Report to the County of Lanark*.

Till the end of 1832 the preoccupation of the main body of the workers with the Reform struggle delayed the growths of the movement. But thereafter disillusionment with the fruits of the political agitation, which had enfranchised the middle classes and left the workers voteless, brought fresh recruits thronging into the Trade Unions and Owenite Societies. Political means having failed, the workers were minded to try Trade Unionism and Co-operation as the means to social emancipation. By 1833 Owen found himself at the head of a huge working-class movement eagerly demanding a lead.

It was at this stage that Owen formed the famous Grand National Consolidated Trades Union—known to its contemporaries as *the Trades Union*, and feared as a vast and potentially revolutionary uprising of the working class. For a while Owen dreamed great dreams. In 1816 it had seemed to him that, if only his "Plan" were adopted, the whole face of the world could be, at once changed. The failure of New Harmony had not taught him to moderate his hopes; he had become steadily more Utopian and millennial as he grew older. Now, he proclaimed to the workers that by their might and rationality there should come speedily a great change by which all misery and poverty would at once be swept away.

For the record of hasty strikes and bitter lock-outs which followed the formation of "the Trades Union," for the savage sentence passed on the unfortunate Dorchester labourers merely for the crime of joining it, for the speedy collapse of the vast and ill-organised body which Owen had called into being, reference must be made to the histories of Trade Unionism and the working-class movement, or to my life of Owen. Within a year of its formation, the great Trades Union was shattered into a thousand fragments, and Owen had ceased to be the leader of the British working class. Within two years more, a new political agitation—the Chartist Movement — was arising, and the great Trade Union struggle of 1834 was no more than a memory.

Owenism, however, did not die. From one

stream of Owenite influence sprang the modern Co-operative Movement; another went on to give birth to the Secularist agitation. Owen himself, turning more and more from reformer to prophet, became the apostle of a "Rational Religion" which was the forerunner of the modern Ethical movement. For more than twenty years longer he poured out books, pamphlets and magazines in an endless stream, and a body of faithful disciples continued to spread his gospel. But he was already an old man when the great Trades Union collapsed; and his later work was no more than a repetition of his earlier writings. The new Co-operative Colony, Queenwood, or Harmony Hall, which he founded in Hampshire in 1839, only repeated the failure of New Harmony in the 'twenties. Owen's real work was over in 1834.

I began by calling Robert Owen something of a puzzle. Leslie Stephen called him "one of those bores who are the salt of the earth." He was essentially a man of one idea, which he preached tirelessly, in and out of season, through the whole of his public life. In pursuit of this idea, practical business man though he had been, he lost all sense of the difference between conception and accomplishment. The millennium seemed to him always just round the next corner; he was endlessly and fatuously hopeful and sure of success. He aimed constantly at the impossible, and was never in the least deterred by failure from aiming at it again. Consequently, he became, despite his early and

outstanding successes, an exceedingly bad leader of men. He was, moreover, more than a little autocratic in his ways—a habit bred in him by his position of unquestioned command at New Lanark, and confirmed by his unswerving and absolute assurance of being on all occasions perfectly right.

This sounds an unlovable picture; and yet, by the general testimony of those who knew him, Owen was a most lovable man. He was utterly without taint of self-seeking, a real and feeling lover of his fellow-men, an unfailing favourite with children. His own children loved him very dearly, and were ardent disciples of his doctrine. Perhaps the easiest answer to the riddle of his personality is that he was a little mad.

If there are grave faults to be found with Owen's practical qualities of leadership, and many failures to his record, few men of the nineteenth century have more solid achievements to their credit. It was a very great thing to have demonstrated, as he did in the worst days of the Industrial Revolution, that low wages, long hours and bad conditions of labour were not the indispensable foundations of Britain's greatness. It was a fine thing to have realised the need for a liberalising education as the basis of a rational citizenship at a time when the Lancasterian monitorial system was regarded as the last word in progressive education. And it was a fine thing to have spoken, even in vain for the time, a word of hope and promise to the unfortunate victims of the Industrial Revolution, and to have

set them building up their Trade Unions and their Co-operative Societies with a new vision of self-government and freedom before their eyes. Long before Carlyle or Ruskin, Owen looked upon the new world which the "Manchester School" was making, and called it "evil," and his calling it so was the more remarkable because he was himself one of the most successful learners in that school. But Owen was greatest because he not only revolted against the horrors of the Industrial Revolution, but also sought a constructive way of escape. His Co-operative Colonies and his great Trades Union alike failed; but he laid the foundations on which a later generation was better able to build. Few men have exerted a wider or more beneficent influence; and none has been more whole-hearted in the service of his faith.

THREE PHILOSOPHERS

WILLIAM JAMES AND HIS WORK

BY CHARLES M. BAKEWELL

"HE was so commanding a presence, so curious and inquiring, so responsive and expansive, and so generous and reckless of himself and of his own, that every one said of him: 'Here is no musty *savant*, but a man, a great man, a man on the heroic scale, not to serve whom is avarice and sin.'" So James speaks with affection of his own teacher Agassiz, and the words fitly describe the impression he himself made upon his students and associates. There was none who did not come under the spell of his personality, none who did not look forward eagerly to every fresh work from his pen. There was such a sense of life and reality in all that he wrote that reading his works had, in a peculiar sense, the charm of personal intercourse. It was like meeting the man himself and sharing in his faith, his enthusiasm, his vision.

One does not think of James as a man with a philosophy, but rather as one who cleared the decks for all future philosophising. Late in life, to be sure, he labelled his view "pragmatism," modestly declaring this to be a "new name for some old ways of thinking," and dedicating the book in

which the view was presented to John Stuart Mill, from whom he first learned the "pragmatic openness of mind." But he is careful to explain that the word stands for a method, and for a theory of truth, rather than for a system of philosophy. And when the view was launched and began to have followers, instinctively he shrank from the use of the label. When a philosophy, even his own, had been ticketed and had become one among many philosophical *isms*, it began to lose some of its vitality.

At very rare intervals in the history of philosophy there have appeared thinkers who, like William James, are too real to be readily classified—thinkers who cut under the distinctions that divide men into schools. When they appear they always speak the language of the people, for the simple reason that they are interpreting life as real men live it with a freshness of vision unknown in the schools. The influence of William James has probably travelled further and gone deeper than that of any other American scholar. Into the languages of all civilised peoples his works have been translated, and everywhere they have met with instant recognition. Honorary degrees, honorary memberships in learned societies and academies, all manner of scholarly distinctions poured in upon him from all quarters. And yet by far the larger part of his published works consists of essays and addresses first delivered to popular or semi-popular audiences; and even his most technical performance, his classic work in psychology, is singularly simple and direct and free

from technicalities, and withal readable. The fact is significant, and explains in part the secret of his hold upon his contemporaries. For, though writing for the people, he was never a populariser. He did not have tucked away in his den some profound and recondite system clothed in the polysyllabic profundity which learning too often affects, which, on occasion, he condescended to translate, in diluted doses, for the benefit of laymen. He could not help being simple and clear, for he lived close to reality in its concrete fullness; and, he could not help writing for the people, and not for a special academic guild, because he believed in the people, and because, furthermore, he believed in the mission of philosophy to help the people to interpret life and to lay hold of life's ideals, and thus to "know a good man when they saw him."

James tells us that it was the hours he spent with Agassiz that "so taught him the difference between all possible abstractionists and all livers in the light of the world's concrete fullness" that he was never able to forget it. And the term which, by preference, he used to describe his position was "radical empiricism," a phrase which shows the importance he ascribed to method in philosophising. How far removed this method is from that which commonly passes for empiricism one can best find out by reading the last chapter in his larger *Psychology*. Without going into details, it is enough here to note that for him the method meant simply a recognition of the fact that "the truth of things is

after all their living fullness." To lay hold of the facts in their living fullness was what he meant by being radically empirical. But the facts of human nature are so intimate and so familiar that they usually escape observation. Or if they chance to be called to our attention, they are apt to be summarily lumped together under some familiar caption, or forthwith named and classified in a conventional way, and thus disposed of. James could always "see the familiar as if it were strange," and was thus peculiarly fitted for the rôle of explorer and observer of the familiar, but little known, facts of the inner life. Moreover, he appreciated as few have done the extent to which words and phrases, dogmas and ready-made principles of classification, blind men's vision and dull their senses. To the facts of experience with which psychology and ethics deal he brought the artist's skill in pure appreciation of values, and he possessed a rare gift for describing what he saw. His special contributions to psychology, and his significance in philosophy, are alike due to this trait.

The first lesson of radical empiricism is that the mind never is merely a passive spectator, never is merely a receptacle for data supplied from without. Such a way of viewing experience is to mistake for the mind what a real mind never is, and for data what real data never are. In a striking passage James writes:

The world's contents are *given* to each of us in an order so foreign to our subjective interests that

we can hardly by an effort of the imagination picture to ourselves what it is like. We have to break that order altogether—and by picking out from it the items which concern us, and connecting them with others far away, which we say "belong" with them, we are able to make out definite threads of sequence and tendency; to foresee particular liabilities and get ready for them; and to enjoy simplicity and harmony in place of what was chaos. . . . Can we realise for an instant what a cross-section of all existence at a definite point of time would be? While I talk and the flies buzz, a sea-gull catches a fish at the mouth of the Amazon, a tree falls in the Adirondack wilderness, a man sneezes in Germany, a horse dies in Tartary, and twins are born in France. What does that mean? Does the contemporaneity of these events with one another and with a million others as disjointed form a rational bond between them, and unite them into anything that means for us a world? Yet just such a collateral contemporaneity, and nothing else, is the real order of the world. It is an order with which we have nothing to do but to get away from it as fast as possible. As I said, we break it; we break it into histories, and we break it into arts, and we break it into sciences; and then we begin to feel at home. We make ten thousand separate serial orders of it, and on any one of these we react as though the others did not exist.[1]

Other philosophies had indeed noted this truth before. But hitherto philosophy has been too much influenced by the model of mathematics and physics, and has thus tended to think in terms of the contrast between form and matter. To-day biological sciences are in the ascendant, and they furnish a safer model for philosophy inasmuch as they bring

[1] "Reflex Action and Theism," *The Will to Believe*, pp. 118, 119.

us nearer to the facts in their concrete fullness. The contrast is between the living and the dead; and life means growth, development, progress, and time is of the essence of experience. The complexity of experience upon which James laid stress was that which it receives in its time dimension. The time quality of experience is its most significant trait. Everywhere we find fluency and continuity, and in all our interpretations, scientific as well as philosophical, the practical categories are dominant. Our philosophy is essentially forward-looking, and must measure values in results, truth values as well as moral values. Hence James was not interested in truth in the abstract, but rather in the actual process of truth-getting—in what happens when an idea is accepted as true; and he noted that ideas passed for true in proportion to their serviceableness in guiding us through the tangled complexity of experience, in making us at home in the world in which we daily live, and thus masters of it. Science itself was a human construction for human ends. And when it gave itself airs, became sacrosanct and absolute, as it did in the positivism of Herbert Spencer, and in the name of science proceeded to rule out of court all those facts and values of the spiritual life which do not admit of verification through the senses, it ceased to be science, and became a sheer philosophical dogmatism. It was in fact no better than those pretentious idealisms which in the name of abstract reason made all things parts of one inclusive whole, made

the world a "block universe," fixed, eternal, perfect, and left no room for what makes life for the individual significant—freedom, choice, novelty, and progress.

Ideals again were not decorations of life in the abstract, highly polished moral ornaments; they were the practical tools of good living. They were not to be measured by the noble language in which they were expressed, nor yet by the subjective feelings or emotions they aroused, but by the way they worked, by what they actually accomplished in the prosaic world of dust and dirt and brute fact, for the betterment of character and of the conditions of human life. The truth is that our life, intellectual and moral, is at every turn ruled by ideals, and back of all ideals lies faith—a faith involving a certain element of risk from which none can escape. And much of James's work is spent in defending the faiths by which men actually live, by testing them in the only manner in which their truth can be tested, by the way in which they express themselves in life.

James also possessed in a wonderful degree what might be called sympathetic imagination—the ability to get as it were on the inside of the other fellow's vision; and whenever he ran across, in the work of another thinker, however humble and obscure, evidence of some fresh and original interpretation of genuine experience, he heralded it as a veritable discovery. It was a new document to be reckoned with. He was, in fact, singularly free from what

he has called "a certain blindness in human beings." How free, a reading of the *Varieties of Religious Experience* will show. The essay in which he discusses this blindness is, as he says, more than the piece of sentimentalism that at first sight it might appear to be. "It connects itself with a definite view of the world and of our moral relations to it." That view is the pluralistic or individualistic philosophy according to which "the truth is too great for any one actual mind, even though that mind be dubbed 'the absolute,' to know the whole of it. The facts and worths of life need many cognisers to take them in. There is no point of view absolutely public and universal." The practical consequence of this philosophy is, he adds, the "well-known democratic respect for the sacredness of individuality."

Perhaps the chief reason for the popularity of James's philosophy is the sense of freedom it brings with it. It is the philosophy of open doors; the philosophy of a new world with a large frontier and, beyond, the enticing unexplored lands where one may still expect the unexpected; a philosophy of hope and promise, a philosophy that invites adventure, since it holds that the dice of experience are not loaded. The older monistic philosophies and religions present by contrast stuffy closed systems and an exhausted universe. They seem to pack the individual into a logical strait-jacket and to represent all history as simply the unfolding of a play that was written to its very last line from the dawn of

creation. These old absolutisms go with the old order of things.

James is an interpreter of the new order of democracy. The most important and interesting thing about a nation, or an historic epoch, as about an individual, was, he held, its "ideals and over-beliefs." And if he is our representative philosopher of democracy, it is not because of his individualism, his appreciation of the unique, the uncommunicable, his hospitality of mind, his respect for humanity in its every honest manifestation, his support of the doctrine of live and let live, his tolerance of all that was not itself intolerant; it is not because of his insistence that professions be measured by their "cash value" in experience, and men by their ability to "make good"; but it is, above all, because of his skill in interpreting those ideals and over-beliefs of his nation and epoch. For these are the things that save democracy from vulgarity and commercialism, that preserve the higher human qualities, and ensure for the citizens of a free land the fruits of civilisation—more air, more refinement, and a more liberal perspective.

James was a firm believer in democracy. But he held that democracy was still on trial, and that no one could tell how it would stand the ordeal. "Nothing future," he writes, "is quite secure; states enough have inwardly rotted; and democracy as a whole may undergo self-poisoning. But, on the other hand, democracy is a kind of religion, and we are bound not to admit its failure. Faiths

and utopias are the noblest exercise of human reason, and no one with a spark of reason in him will sit down fatalistically before the croaker's picture. The best of us are filled with the contrary vision of a democracy stumbling through every error till its institutions glow with justice and its customs shine with beauty. Our better men *shall* show the way and we *shall* follow them. . . The ceaseless whisper of the more permanent ideals, the steady tug of truth and justice, give them but time, *must* warp the world in their direction." [1]

[1] *Memories and Studies*, pp. 317 ff.

PLATO AS A NOVELIST

By Vida D Scudder

How far behind us seem the days when the future author of *Adam Bede* wrote sedately to a youthful friend that she read no novels, because "the weapons of the Christian warfare were never sharpened at the forge of Romance"! Whatever be true of Christian warfare and its weapons, novels are nowadays a necessary and wholesome part of everyone's daily life. Did they serve no other purpose, they afford an invaluable gymnastic of the sympathies. Reading them, we acquire with minimum effort a broadening of our affections, a liking for all sorts and conditions of people, including not a few—crooks, drunkards, fools even, —from whom in real life we should turn with disgust and distaste. If we moderns are growing more inwardly democratic, if we take life with more emotional versatility and humorous tolerance than our forbears, we owe the gain less to our political institutions than to our excellent habit of indiscriminate novel reading. Wiseacres may bid us devote our whole mind to Bergson. Him we shall not neglect. But let us also insist on

the advantage to our manners and our morals of familiarity with *Havoc*, *A Millionaire Baby*, and *The Tu-Tze's Tower*.

Yet there is a melancholy fact which we cannot escape. As people grow older, they get fussy about their fiction. Reproachfully, despondently, middle age finds that it has lost the delectable power of youth to enjoy anything in story form. The mysteries seem set in pattern, and flat when solved. The princesses of Graustein have no more attraction than summer girls in a tennis court. The latest flights of psychic aeroplanes lift us away from earth if you will, but into peculiarly vacuous mid-air. And the grim tales of mean streets revolt like a stroll through the slums in hot weather.

This I submit is the moment for Plato. Not Plato the philosopher. Such a gentleman may exist, spinning an intricate spider web of dialectic, along whose tenuous gossamers the daring intellect darts insecurely outward towards its elusive prey, a conclusion. This subtle personage is no hammock companion. Plato the novelist is our man; writer of fiction bathed in the immortal dew of the world's dawning; magician who evokes for us the moving-picture of the most fascinating society ever known; master delineator of the weaknesses and the loveliness of men. Tell me if you will of a Plato wise in archetypal ideas, concerned with the relations of knowledge and virtue, keen on pursuit of the perfect state. Him I seek not in the summer noons, —nay, but the witty satirist, the lofty lover, the

creator of that most vivid character in the world's fiction, who is the friend of Crito and Agathon, the adorer of Charmides, the beloved by Alcibiades. With this Plato I can keep delightful fellowship, whithersoever he may lead.

Nowhere shall I find more variety. Does my palate crave comic salt? Here is *Euthydemus*, bubbling over with pure mischief, which finally breaks into farce roaring as that of *The Pickwick Papers*, when the two Sophists, twisted up by Socrates to assert that everything is what it isn't, are greeted with a tumult of glee. Is high romance to my taste? Here it weaves spells true as in Shakespeare's sonnets; for these Dialogues abound with sentiment of every shade, and at the same banquet we may encounter passion most lofty and most base, listening at will to Diotima or to Alcibiades. Do we find light society sketches more to our mind than confidences so searching? The early Dialogues, *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, and the rest, aim at nothing and hit it as inconclusively as modern realism, yet are felicitous as Jane Austen in echoing the chit-chat of the town and the evanescent moods of well-bred people. Where is a more amusing scene than the opening of the *Protagoras*? Where a sweeter idyll than the picture of Socrates in the *Phædrus*, dabbling his toes in the brook under the plane-tree, as he spins lazy yarns about that fair creature Psyche, and ends with an exquisite prayer to Pan? The aeroplane of the *Timæus* sweeps us into planetary space more effectively than that

of Marie Corelli; *Phædo* and the *Apology* purify by pity and terror as only great tragedy can do.

The beauty of the art is that none of these types is produced mechanically after the modern fashion. Life in its entirety is in Plato behind each mode of life. Through the gayest persiflage plays suddenly high passion for the argument. Presto! Greek worldly wisdom inhibits with salutary jest some imaginative flight. Do not tell me that I am reading the man who has infected the generations with a microbe tempting them to prefer dream to fact. My Plato is obsessed by desire for experience, singularly alive to the concrete, fascinated by the stir and movement of very life. He is the match of Dickens for portraiture, of Meredith for dramatic dialogue, of Browning for situation. With Balzac or Tolstoi, he is competent to quicken us by the spectacle of existence, now to tragic passion, now to the laughter of the gods.

We may be pardoned for finding the dialectic stiff, and for offering our meek "Certainly" at intervals with Laches or Nicias, not quite sure to what we are assenting, but either because we want to please Socrates, or because the maddening old man will tease us worse if we contradict him. Let us forget the talk, think of the talkers, and give thanks for the men and manners that live for us in these pages. A sense of solid reality is the ultimate impression imparted to the literary mind by this greatest of the world's idealists.

Socrates is the centre of the group, of course,

and we all think we know Socrates, though we are mistaken. But why ignore the Athenians who gather round him? How they stand out, the child and the citizen, the soldier and the actor, the academic dignitary, the plain man on the street! No dummies they, giving absent assent to the great teacher. Most are defined as to aspect with a few perfect touches, each speaks in character. In the dramatically vital dialogue, the very manner in which they take refutation, the quality of their agreement—now sullen, now eager, now careless, now thoughtful—sets them before us with high imaginative art. And how admirably are they introduced, in those lovely settings which give us perhaps our most vivid knowledge of Greek life! Especially in the minor Dialogues, which are rather tentative *jeux d'esprit* than philosophical discussions, the argument does not pretend to get anywhere. It chases its own tail and drops like a tired kitten on the spot where it began. But meantime we are seeing life, we are meeting Greeks, and we do not care a rap whether or no we succeed in defining friendship or temperance or courage. It is more important to chat with the boy Charmides, to enjoy his choice manners and his rare beauty, and inhale the aroma of his delightful youth.

Socrates, in this Dialogue, is just back from military service at Potidæa, where he has borne hardship and danger stolidly, as Alcibiades shall one day tell us. Now he is hungry for civilisation: the hum in the palæstra is delectable to him. We

listen for a few minutes to greetings, and the pleasant gossip of the town. It must be acknowledged that Socrates asks about "the present state of philosophy," as one might inquire into politics after absence in foreign parts; but presently with equal interest he is asking about the season's "buds." These—we are in Greece—are the lads just reaching manhood. Are any of them remarkable, he wants to know, for beauty or sense? And just then the merry troop appears, making a great din, one of them, Charmides, easily the most beautiful. "I must admit," says Socrates, "that I was quite astonished at his beauty and stature. All the world seemed to be enamoured of him. Amazement and confusion reigned when he entered. All the boys, even to the very least child, turned and looked at him, as if he were a statue. Chærephon called to me and said:

"'What do you think of him, Socrates? Has he not a beautiful face? But you would think nothing of his face if you could see his naked form.'

"'By Heracles,' I said, 'there never was such a paragon, if he has only one other slight addition.'

"'What is that?" said Critias.

"'If he has a noble soul; and being of your house, Critias, he may be expected to have this.'

"'He is fair and good within as he is without,' said Critias.

"'Shall we ask him, then,' I said, 'to show us, not his body, but his soul? He is just of an age when he will like to talk.'"

Hard to surpass in modern fiction, that bit of dialogue! Here is full Greece: delight in beauty of form as of countenance; swift courtesy; the Socratic love of loveliness within—"Is not the wiser always the fairer, sweet friend?" asks the sage in another connection; and finally the unquenchable zest for conversation.

What interests Socrates just now is not an abstract question, but a charming boy. He proceeds to invent topics, that he may savour the soul of Charmides. First they talk a little about a headache that bothers the lad—ailments, then as now, forming a convenient introductory theme. And Christian Science would seem to be less original than it supposes, for we find Socrates remarking that Charmides can get rid of his headache easily if he will cure his soul "by the use of certain charms, and these charms are fair words." All very well, but they soon grow bored over Charmides' headache, and cast about for another subject. Temperance will do; what does Charmides think of temperance? He is a remarkably temperate lad, by the way, remarks his relative, Critias, taking no pains to lower his voice.

Charmides blushes—his blushes come readily—at this blatant praise. Then, after some hesitation he feels his way till he says that temperance is quietness. Not a bad answer, surely—one well befitting a young Greek gentleman. Socrates, however, though pleased, points out that a sluggish man is not necessarily a temperate one, and that

energetic actions are usually better than slow, quiet ones; in a word, that scientific efficiency does not preclude temperance. Greek standards are not so far from modern, we perceive. Charmides' tries again, frank ingenuousness and good breeding in his every word: May not temperance be modesty? Then Socrates, with Critias to help, gets seriously to work: the trail may lead in a circle, but to pursue it is great sport, and his object, the enjoyment of Charmides in his lovely youth, has been fully attained.

Lysis is younger than Charmides; he and his chum, Menexenus, are little fellows, hardly beyond childhood. A bigger lad, one Hippothales, has what in college parlance would be termed a "crush" on Lysis; we are in that Greek world where romance lives from man to man. Socrates will show Hippothales the best way to win the boy's affections. At least so he pretends; what he is really after is the pleasure of converse with an awakening mind. How to get at Lysis? Hippothales says that if only Socrates will sit down and begin to talk, the boy will be sure to come, and so it happens. There has been a sacrifice, and all the boys are dressed in white. They are playing a game, taking their dice out of little wicker baskets; small Lysis, crowned with a wreath and fair as a vision, is looking on. Presently he begins to glance around, timidly but wistfully, at Socrates chatting in his quiet corner. Soon his friend Menexenus joins the group, and then Lysis picks up courage to

come too—sentimental Hippothales, whom the lad evidently does not like, hiding out of the way. It is a pretty scene, and the talk is equally pretty, though desultory enough on the surface. Anyone who wants an example of a grown-up mind adapting itself wisely and tenderly to childhood, might well turn to it:

"I dare say, Lysis, that your father and mother love you very much?"

"That they do," he said.

"And that they would wish you to be perfectly happy?"

"Yes."

"But do you think that anyone is happy who . . . cannot do what he likes?"

"I should think not indeed," he said. . . .

"Do your father and your mother, then, permit you to do what you like, and never rebuke or hinder you?"

"Yes indeed, Socrates, there are a great many things which they hinder me from doing."

So Lysis has to tackle some hard thinking—yet thinking quite within the compass of a little chap. He enjoys the talk hugely, and wants his friend to share it. "In a childish and affectionate manner," he whispers in Socrates' ear: "Do, Socrates, tell Menexenus what you have been telling me." Once he interrupts: "I am sure that we have been wrong, Socrates." "And he blushed at his own words, as if he had not intended to speak; but the words escaped him involuntarily in his eagerness."

Before the talk is over, all concerned know a good deal more than they did about friendship and other important matters—though as for definitions, on which Socrates is daft, they have not reached any. Is friendship based on contrast or similarity of temperament? they wonder, and we are wondering yet. Who knows? They might have decided, or even have reached a definition, had it not been for the tutors. But these break in "like an evil apparition," very cross because it is so late; and though the talkers drive them off, they keep on shouting at their charges till they force them to start for home.

Endearing and beautiful youths like Charmides and Lysis hold a position of central importance throughout the Platonic tales. We know how Socrates loved them, and remember that his fascination over them was a cause of his death. Yet if the Dialogues breathe this ecstatic joy in youth for youth's sake, they are also full of sly delight in noting the humours of grown men. Crito, Socrates' special friend, is an old man, wealthy, dignified, not at all clever. One wonders what he got from life-long converse with the deepest mind in Greece. Socrates is fond of his company, tells him merry tales like that of the *Euthydemus*; it is to Crito that he addresses his last words. The figure is always respectfully and tenderly touched. So is that of gentle old Lysimachus, who has never heard of Socrates, but has a high regard for Socrates' father. Another old man is Protagoras the Sophist, an academic type cleverly sketched: honest, weighty,

a copious lecturer, presenting with facile sonority the truth of the past, and a little fussed and cross under the impact of the truth of the future.

Plato gives us men of action, too. There are the soldiers, Laches and Nicias, who seek a just idea of courage to impart to the rising generation. Laches is a blunt man, annoyed that he cannot express himself: "I fancy I do know the nature of courage," he complains, "but somehow or other she has slipped away from me, and I cannot tell her nature." He considers, privately that "the examination of such niceties" as definitions is no suitable employment for a statesman or a soldier. Still he gets a little way when, from satisfaction with the remark that a courageous man is one who does not run away, he discovers with hardly any help that "courage is the endurance of the soul." However, Nicias has to give him yet more hints —ill-fated Nicias, who is shown as one of the most thoughtful people in Plato, hardly inferior to Socrates himself in insight. Was the reflective turn of mind, such an asset to the man, a disadvantage to the soldier?

Other types are the broad-minded physician Eryximachus and Ion the actor — the purely emotional man, this last, a-quiver over his own recitations. Socrates is particularly felicitous with Ion, who avows that there is no part of Homer on which he does not speak well, and that he feels rapt out of himself when he recites, but strange to say, is inclined to be sleepy when anyone else recites

from another poet. Socrates, who depreciates himself pleasantly as "a common man who only speaks the truth," treats him gently: tells him that he is quite mad, and when Ion, though acquiescent, is a little subdued, proceeds to say that Homer and all the great imaginations were mad likewise, and that inspiration is none the worse for being irrational, but rather the better; and we leave Ion as pleased and bewildered as M. Jourdain. It is a very amusing dialogue.

Some of Plato's *dramatis personæ* are dull, some slow, some simple-minded; yet on the whole they are amazingly attractive. He shows us no villains. Nevertheless there are shadows, firmly if delicately touched, in his picture. No fierce denunciation—that was not the style of Plato, or his master—but an inexorable trick of letting the shallow, fanatical, or cruel man speak for himself. There is Anytus, for example, in the *Meno*. It is worth while to study Anytus, for he is to be one of Socrates' chief accusers. His inimitable responses, few and brief, illuminate him for ever.

Socrates praises him warmly when he first appears: "There is Anytus sitting by us; he is the person whom we should ask. In the first place, he is the son of a wealthy and wise father, and he is a well-conditioned, modest man, not insolent or overbearing or annoying; moreover, he has given his son a good education." All this appears to be true; it is persons like Anytus who usually put to death Socrates and Jesus. Anytus gives placid acquiescence

to the course of the argument till it touches the concrete; then he flares up. This happens to be at a mention of the Sophists. Socrates is mildly surprised; he reasons with Anytus: Can the men whom everyone considers so wise be really out of their minds, as Anytus hints? But Anytus is not a reasoning being. "Out of their minds!" he cries. "No, Socrates, the young men who gave their money to them are out of their minds, and their relatives and guardians who entrusted them to their care were still more out of their minds." What irony, that Socrates should have first incurred this man's suspicions and rage on behalf of the Sophists! For we know that Socrates was not over-fond of the Sophists himself. But how human it all is, and how prone Anytus still is to raise the angry cry, "Out of their minds!" against those with whom he disagrees!

"Has any of the Sophists wronged you, Anytus?" . . .

"No, indeed; neither I nor any of my belongings has ever had, nor would I suffer them to have anything to do with them." . . .

"Then, my dear friend, how can you know whether a thing is good or bad, of which you are wholly ignorant?"

"Quite well. I am quite sure that I know what manner of men these are, whether I know them or not."

Anytus is quite sure still, and he writes for almost every newspaper in the country; his violent

talk, charged with prejudice and animosity, greets us in every haunt of men. For Anytus is a "stand-patter"—modest, well-conditioned Anytus, who educates his sons so carefully. "If you won't trust the Sophists, to whom do you look for guidance?" asks Socrates; and Anytus gives the unvarying answer of his caste: "Any Athenian gentleman" taken at random will, so he asserts, do perfectly well. But these gentlemen—did they grow of themselves? Socrates must know; and Anytus, impatiently satisfied, returns the immortal answer: "I imagine that they learned of the previous generation of gentlemen."

It is of no use, Socrates; you might as well leave Anytus alone. But Socrates does not leave him alone, thereby, were safety dear, making a vast mistake. He plays gadfly till he stings the poor, comfortable man past endurance. So Anytus breaks into open rage: accuses Socrates—and again the stand-patter's complaint of the radical sounds queerly familiar—of "speaking evil of men," and utters a veiled threat, sinister enough in the light of the outcome. Socrates dismisses him with a touch of cool contempt, unusual in the suavest of adversaries, who generally coaxes his most irritated antagonists back into the trail of the argument; then turns to point out to the more responsive Meno the unconventionality of virtue, and its immediate character, derived from no tradition, not even that of the gentlemen of Athens. For with subtle instinct for dramatic contrast, Plato

includes in this Dialogue that famous scene in which the independent intuition of truth is illustrated by the power of Meno's boy-slave to prove a geometrical proposition.

Nothing could be more natural, more unstudied, than all this talk. It has the desultory wavering of life itself. Of conversation, that crux of the novelist, Plato is past-master; one must turn to Meredith or Anatole France to find his equal. His dialogue makes the ordinary talk, say of the people in Mrs. Humphry Ward, appear soggy with that curse of art, the obvious. There is never too much flour in Plato's baking; and his deft touch is one reason why we rank him among the poets, "light, winged, and holy." He catches the words as they fly, and though they seem to flutter vaguely like butterflies, they are really driving straight like a flight of migrating birds for a goal beyond the horizon.

However, it is to be remembered that Plato had an advantage over modern writers, for he had Greece to present and Athenians for his characters. The fine art of social intercourse is here brought to its last point of perfection. Men are thinking—everybody, except perhaps Anytus, is thinking in Plato—though, being human, they tend to think overmuch the thoughts of other people; but they are never thinking alone. The intellectual life in Greece is a social and not a solitary pursuit. That is why Plato is a great novelist as well as a philosopher. This society is worth reading about, moreover, quite apart from its brains, for the mere

charm of its manners, a charm unsurpassed. When Aristodemus appears uninvited at the banquet, how graciously does Agathon put him at his ease! What pretty compliments they pay one another, how generously they admire each other's excellencies, what capital and witty jokes they crack! Never do we pass our time in vulgar company; we are aristocrats in every sense. We move on principle only in the best circles—and how very good they are!

Socrates revels in this society, for he, too, is the most sociable of men. Like Dr. Johnson, whom he much resembles, he takes unfeigned interest in all the little affairs of the town; especially is he quite at home in that perennial topic of conversation, the psychology of the affections. He likes a gossip as well as any man, and has a marvellous catholic taste in his choice of associates. It is entertaining to study him through his reaction on people. Browning did not invent the oblique method of showing character in *The Ring and the Book.* Courteous old Lysimachus, who does not move in intellectual circles, invites Socrates to call because he is the son of his father. The soldier Laches knows him only as a man of action, and has sincere regard for him. Bit by bit, we get a feeling for the man himself. A quick man, intolerant of stupidity, yet helped to patient self-control by the rare, divine instinct of the teacher; taking his revenge in that irony that baffles and allures the ages, an irony of which his successors—Rabelais,

Swift, Arnold—have never quite caught the secret. He never lays down the law, he never loses his grip. Yet one sees that people have one trick that tries him almost past endurance, the inveterate habit of defining by the concrete instance. "Courage is not running away from your post," says Laches. "Temperance is doing things orderly," says Charmides. And Euthyphro, whom we shall meet presently, caps the climax of this kind of definition when he gravely announces: "Virtue is doing as I am doing." But Socrates never snubs one of them; with infinite forbearance he leads them on. Terrible tease; superb old man, who loves the argument, as argument, tenaciously, yet is capable of turning round with splendid inconsistence and "believing where he has not proved"! What a picture! But if we talk of Socrates, we shall never stop. The portrait is literally incomparable; nothing has ever approached it.

So is Plato realist of the realists. Yet at times we leave Greece behind us and below. We watch the soul putting forth her wings, or the chariot of humanity thundering on its perilous way, or the strange life of "earth-born men"; and find ourselves at the fountain-head of the imaginative literature of Europe. Plato the myth-maker gives us more direct narrative than Plato the realist; and his myths, whether in the *Timæus*, the *Phædrus*, or the *Symposium*, are in purest romantic tone. All dreamers have dreamed these dreams after him. Yet from the starry flights through which he bears

us we return with pleasure to Greek life. We are glad to know that Socrates held high converse on the passions with Diotima, the priestess, in those mysterious interviews that suggest the very quintessence of romance; for our part, we are well content with the society of the pompous Protagoras and the absurd Euthydemus, of Euthyphro the prig, and fair Agathon, most winning of hosts, of little Lysis, and the rest; with the walk, the palæstra, the beloved scenes through which moves a spirit in Silenus mask, at once their representative and their destroyer. Even in Plato, realism wins out in the long run.

Mastery over dialogue, over characterisation, setting, romantic invention—these are great assets for a novelist. Plato has one more, perhaps greater: unfailing instinct for the dramatic. True, there is as little formal plot as in those admirable intimations concerning M. Bergeret; but there is an immense amount of drama, so to speak, in solution. In the undercurrent of the dialogue, things are constantly happening to people. Relations of affection and hate develop, mature, decay; minds are brought into ever-shifting connections with each other and with ideas. If there is no plot, at least the feeling for situation is strong. Who can forget that dining-hall where Socrates is found at dawn prophesying Shakespeare to the sleepy Aristophanes and Agathon; or the prison where disciples gather around an old man chafing his leg; or the judgment hall, where Socrates, far from keeping august silence as did a

Greater brought to judgment, pours forth marvellous words for the last time?

Perhaps the most poignant situation just precedes these last. Socrates, awaiting trial in that familiar porch to the temple of King Archon, near which he had once held pleasant converse with young Charmides, encounters Euthyphro the pious soothsayer, to whom he begins to talk with his usual friendly cheer. Socrates is accused by one Meletus, a young man he hardly knows, who "has a beak," it seems, and "long, straight hair, and a beard that is ill-grown." Euthyphro, on the contrary, is an accuser; the man whom he accuses is his own father, arraigned by him on a charge of murder. Socrates' spontaneous start of shocked surprise, his horrified remarks to the complacent Pharisee clinging to the letter of the law, reveal with flashing clarity, as they were meant to do, the deep devoutness and innate reverence for the past of the man to be put to death by respectable Athens for a free-thinker and a corrupter of youth. "Virtue is doing as I am doing"! Or, if you please, men learn their standards "from the preceding generations of gentlemen"! "Neither," says Socrates sternly. Between the arrogant self-confidence of Euthyphro and the conventionality of Anytus, he holds sensitive balance, difficult and just.

Socrates was executed, of course. The *Euthyphro* serves as prelude to the sure tragedy towards which the undercurrent has been setting from the first. For here is the final greatness of Plato's superb

historic romance; one tense conflict is in progress from first to last. We discover this gradually, and do not quite understand the situation till all is over. Then, ah! then, looking back, we realise that there has been a plot after all. Over that exquisite youth on which the high lights carefully fall, that youth so delicately presented, so passionately wooed, the world of Athens wedded to its smooth tradition, and the man intent upon the naked truth, must wrestle to the death. These protagonists are shown with a composed mastery of art. The artist's dispassionate sympathy reveals without partisanship the animus of both, as well as that of the onlookers, who are presented with unrivalled finesse.

For there is no mechanical villainy about this Athenian world that kills Socrates. It is admirable in its way. Its conception of a gentleman has never been equalled. Its sense of *noblesse oblige* is strong. We have noted its perfect manners, its gracious charm. Moreover, it is far from being consciously materialised. These noble citizens have the personal beauty and the delight in physical activities of Arnold's barbarians; but show at first sight none of the imperviousness to ideas which he attributes to the class. Quite the contrary. They flock to their lectures and concerts. They prefer after-dinner speeches to music and wine; and their speeches are concerned, not with programmes, as too often befalls us moderns, but with ideas. They think they want to think, these supple-minded Greeks. " Let us follow the argument," they are

always blithely saying, "whithersoever it may lead us." As Hippothales says, "Their entertainment is conversation," and the zest of this good talk lives down the ages. It touches with impartial cheer on social justice, philology, military tactics, mysticism, ethics, poetry, small quibbles, and large issues. How well, as a rule, good breeding checks their eagerness, how anxiously they consider the best methods of education, how solicitous they are about the beautiful-and-the-good! And how enthusiastic about great minds! When Protagoras comes to Athens, Hippocrates rushes before daybreak to announce the event; has to feel around in the dark for Socrates' truckle-bed; and Socrates has all the trouble in the world persuading him to wait for light before they seek the presence of the sage. He is quite in the fashion, if we may judge from the cross servant who bangs the door in their faces, he is so tired of opening it to seekers. In breadth of outlook, in culture, in lively charm and noble seriousness, this is the very society in which we should all like to live.

And Socrates? Well, Socrates certainly is exasperating to a degree. There is that Silenus aspect of his, when he jeers with such gusto at things we hold sacred. And then we never know whether he is in earnest or not. And he is for ever putting us in the wrong, when we know and he knows that we are in the right. A horrid habit! It undermines our good practical pragmatism, and prevents us from getting a living. Society is bound to put the man to death who allows it no assumptions. It

is morally immodest, so Anytus is convinced, to insist like that on pulling off Truth's last garment. Then he is always so maddeningly good-natured! And the vicious fascination of the man! There is youth, adorable, expectant youth, wistfully waiting to be led in that appointed way of honourable, safe tradition in which we are its precursors and natural guides; and there is Socrates, always luring it into untried trails! Can we allow his anarchical force to have its way? Oh, we remember it too well! We are older now, but we too have felt that magic. We know how that voice lured us, how we were be-spelled by the keen wit, the merry word, the ironic play that so easily put our elders to the blush, the delusive sympathy with our interests; how we had glimpses of a far skyey country where the eternal were, which made the streets of Athens flat and dull. Nor have we ever been quite satisfied since, grave citizens though we be, in our function of carrying on the state with due regard to the proprieties. It is all the fault of Socrates! Away with this agitator, this impious person, this corrupter of youth!

For Socrates had been teaching in Athens a long time, and the youths whom he had charmed and wooed, connived when they grew up at killing him. Unlike Jesus, whose ministry was brief, though we do not know its exact duration, Socrates had his full, free chance at winning men. And he made a failure at it. Some of his most important pupils —Alcibiades, Charmides, Critias—turned out badly,

and the Athenians did not forget it. Most of the others deserted him. Was it that he was on the wrong tack, after all, in trying to make man cultivate virtue by the means of knowledge? Was it that the times were not ripe? At all events, he was much alone at the last. Besides old, faithful Crito, there was a very small group in that prison. Youth had deserted him; tradition had won the day. So he drank his poison—not sorry, one surmises, despite all his cheery love of this good world, to try the great adventure; and the proprieties were left in possession of youth, the forever desired. They usually are, for that matter; this dogged struggle for possession of the future is actual to-day as in Athens, renewed from generation to generation, never lost, never won. Socrates is among us still: always worsted, never disposed of, albeit in our democratic days his spirit is diffused, and must be sought at diverse points of collective experience, rather than in one great figure. And the compositions which show him in his Greek dress moving through that vital and charming society are immortal fiction, not only because they have such rare power to enlarge our sympathies, but because at bottom they present persistent fact.

DARWIN'S "THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES"

BY PROFESSOR SIR ARTHUR KEITH, F.R.S., M.D., LL.D.

WHEN H.M.S. *Beagle*, "of 235 tons, rigged as a barque, and carrying six guns," slipped from her moorings in Devonport harbour on 27 December, 1831, the events which were to end in the writing of this book were being set in train. She had on board Charles Darwin, a young Cambridge graduate, son of a wealthy physician of Shrewsbury, in the rôle of naturalist. On the last day of February 1832 the *Beagle* reached South America and Darwin, just entered on his twenty-fourth year, stepped ashore on a continent which was destined to raise serious but secret doubts in his mind concerning the origin of living things. He was not a naturalist who was content merely to collect specimens, to note habits, to chart distributions, or to write accurate descriptions of what he found; he never could restrain his mind from searching into the reason of things. Questions were ever rising in his mind. Why should those giant fossil animals he dug from recent geological strata be so near akin to the little armour plated armadillos which he found still alive in the same place? Why

was it, as he passed from district to district, he found that one species was replaced by another near akin to it? Did every species of animal and plant remain just as it was created, as was believed by every respectable man known to him? Or, did each and all of them change, as some greatly daring sceptics had alleged?

In due course, after surveying many uncharted coasts, the *Beagle* reached the Galapagos Islands, five hundred miles to the west of South America. Here his doubts became strengthened and his belief in orthodoxy shaken. 'Why was it that in those islands living things should be not exactly the same as in South America but yet so closely alike? And why should each of the islands have its own peculiar creations? Special creation could not explain such things. South America thus proved to be a second University to Charles Darwin; after three and a half years spent in its laboratories he graduated as the greatest naturalist of the nineteenth century. It had taken him even longer to obtain an ordinary pass degree from the University of Cambridge.

The first stage in the preparation of *The Origin of Species* thus lies in South America. The second belongs to London. The *Beagle* having circumnavigated the world returned to England in October 1836, and by his twenty-ninth birthday, 12 February, 1837, Darwin was ensconced in London with his papers round him working hard at his *Journal* and *Reports*, but at the same time

determined to resolve those illicit doubts which had been raised by his observations in South America and which still haunted him, concerning the manner in which species and animals had come into the world. He knew he was treading on dangerous ground; for an Englishman to doubt the truth of the Biblical record in the year 1837 was to risk becoming a social outcast; but, for Darwin, to run away from truth was to be condemned by a tender conscience as a moral coward. He was a sensitive man, reflective, quiet, warm-hearted, ever heeding the susceptibilities of his friends. Added to this he was also intensely modest and as intensely honest, fearing above all things even the semblance of a lie in thought or in act. The facts he had observed in South America merely raised his suspicions. They suggested to him that animals and plants might become, in the course of time, so changed as to form new species. At first they were but suspicions, but as he proceeded to collect evidence in London, the suspicions deepened. More particularly was this the case when he inquired into the methods employed by breeders to produce new varieties of pigeons, fowls, dogs, cattle and horses. He soon realised that for the creation of new domestic breeds two factors were necessary—first there must be a breeder or selector, and secondly the animals experimented on must have in them a tendency to vary in a desired direction. Given those two factors, a new breed, having all the external appearances of a new species, could be produced at will.

Having satisfied himself on this point, he turned again to animals and plants living in a state of nature and found that they too tended to vary. "But where," he had to ask himself, "is Nature's selector or breeder?" At this juncture he happened to read an essay written by the Rev. T. R. Malthus, first published in 1798, *On the Principle of Population*, and as he read, realised that the breeder he was in search of did exist in Nature. It took the form, he perceived, of a self-acting mechanism—a mechanism of selection. Among the individuals of every species, there goes on, as Malthus had realised, a competition or struggle for the means of life, and Nature selects the individuals which vary in the most successful direction. The idea that living things had been evolved had been held by many men before Darwin came on the scene; it was already well known that animals tended to vary in form and in habit, but the realisation that Nature had set up in the world of living things an automatic breeder, which utilised variations as a means of progress, was entirely Darwin's discovery.

And thus it came about that during his second year in London (1838) and before he had completed the thirtieth of his life, Darwin had wrested from Nature one of her deepest secrets—a secret which gave him a clue to one of her many unsolved mysteries. Great ideas, if they are to come at all, usually come before a man is thirty and it was so in Darwin's case. In South America he had merely had doubts about the orthodox belief; the revelation

which came in London convinced him that the real story of creation was quite different from the one usually told and accepted. With the discovery of the law of Natural Selection in 1838 *The Origin of Species* entered its second stage of preparation, and it is convenient to regard this stage as ending in January 1839, when Darwin married his cousin Emma Wedgwood.

The third stage opened in September 1842, when he resolved to find peace for study and for health by removing his family from London to Down in the chalky uplands of Kent, where he lived until his death on 14 April, 1882. He had inherited money and resolved to devote his life to the solution of the old problem of creation, instead, as is so often the case with men of his class, to leisure and to sport. On his arrival at Down he believed he was in possession of a secret of momentous import —and so unholy that he determined to say nothing of it until he had attained complete certainty. He had at that time many researches in hand and, as he worked at them, he was ever on the outlook for evidence to prove the truth or untruth of his theory. We know that, just before he left London, he had permitted himself the luxury of seeing what his theory looked like when reduced to paper; that sketch, written in June 1842, is really the first outline of *The Origin of Species*, but it then filled only thirty-five pages of manuscript. It was not until 1844, when he had been two years at Down, and had amassed much additional evidence, that

he committed to writing a complete exposition of his theory; this time he succeeded in filling 230 pages of manuscript. This third stage—the stage of accumulating evidence—continued with many intermissions until 1854, when the preparation of *The Origin of Species* entered its fourth stage.

In 1854 he completed his research on Barnacles—a seven years' task, and was thus free to set in systematic order the immense amount of evidence he had accumulated—all of it bearing upon the problem of transmutation or evolution of every form of life. This he now proceeded to do, but there were many interruptions. From time to time, while busy with many inquiries and experiments and sadly hindered by indifferent health, a chapter of his projected work was written and as his self-imposed task proceeded it became apparent to him it was to be a big book—three volumes at least. And so he went along until the summer of 1858 was reached, when on a day early in June the rural postman pushed into his letter-box a missive which gave him the shock of his life and brought his projected book to a sudden end. The postmark showed that the missive had been dispatched from an address in the Celebes Islands. In this sudden manner we pass from the fourth to the fifth and final stage in the preparation of *The Origin of Species*.

In the history of Science there is no episode so dramatic as that which compelled Charles Darwin to pass so abruptly to the fifth and final stage in the

preparation of *The Origin of Species*. He was no longer a young man; he was in his fiftieth year. Let us look for a moment at the staging of this drama and the actors who took part in it. In February 1858, when Darwin, in his study at Down, was suffering from his "accursed stomach" and struggling painfully with his proofs of transmutation, another Englishman, Alfred Russel Wallace, was lying in the small island of Ternate in the Malay Archipelago suffering from bouts of malarial fever, and puzzling over the same problem as engaged Darwin's attention at Down. The writer has experienced these bouts of ague and knows how vivid is the imagery that then races through the brain and how nimbly the mind hunts along a train of ideas. Such a bout brought Wallace his revelation. He was fourteen years Darwin's junior. He was also a poor man, being dependent for a livelihood on the collections he made as a travelling naturalist. He, too, had visited South America just as Darwin had, and it was while collecting on the Amazon that he became impressed by the tendency of animals and plants to vary. Soon after his arrival in Borneo he had read, just as Darwin had done eighteen years before him, Malthus's *Essay on Population*. He had, before then, begun to suspect that species were not immutable, and as his brain raced along during his attack of fever in Ternate it stumbled across the idea which came to Darwin in London—the idea that the struggle would favour those individuals which tended to vary in an advan-

tageous direction and that such individuals might continue to change until a new species was brought into existence. As soon as the attack of fever was over and his temperature had returned to normal he began to write, and at one sitting finished an account of his discovery—an idea which would explain the origin of new species without calling in the aid of any supernatural agency whatsoever. Having written his sketch, he thereupon addressed it to a man who was almost a stranger to him—*Charles Darwin, Esq. F.R.S., Down House, Down, Kent*, where it duly arrived in the third week of June 1858.

On opening this missive Darwin found that the fears of his best friends, Sir Charles Lyell and Dr. Joseph Hooker of Kew Gardens, had come only too true; he had been forestalled. By a curious stroke of fate, the favourite child of his brain, which he had nursed and tended in secret for over twenty years, was suddenly deprived of that which is so dear to the heart of a father—the birthright of priority. Wallace's sketch, he found, was almost a replica of the one he himself had penned after his arrival at Down; and how much had he discovered and added to the original sketch in the intervening years! Darwin knew that if he acted rationally, and he was as nearly rational as men are made, he ought to welcome Wallace's communication. It was a confirmation of his own conclusions. He was ashamed to find himself troubled at heart over this paltry matter of priority. It is a long way

from Kent to the land of Moriah and from Darwin's day to that of Abraham, but distant as are the places and the times, they are linked together by the same human nature. Abraham with his knife and bundle of faggots was resolved to make the supreme sacrifice and so was Darwin, and he would have done it had not his friends Lyell and Hooker intervened. They exercised a judgment worthy of Solomon; justice was to be done to both authors by a conjoint communication to a learned society. They asked Darwin to supply them with a brief abstract of his theory and this, with Wallace's sketch, they sent to the Linnean Society of London. The two papers were read at a meeting held on 1 July, 1858, and caused no great commotion.

This communication having been made, Lyell and Hooker insisted that Darwin must now prepare for publication, and he then began to work on *The Origin of Species* as we now know it. He set himself to abstract and to condense what he had already written. The opening chapters were finished in September 1858 but it took him fully twelve months of toil and tribulation before he could write *finis.* On 24 November, 1859, the book was published and thus ended the fifth stage in the preparation of *The Origin of Species.*

The publishers apparently did not expect a big demand for *The Origin*; at least they printed only 1250 copies. A second edition was called for in 1860—one of 3000 copies. A third appeared in

1861, a fourth in 1866, a fifth in 1869 and a sixth and final edition in 1872. Darwin lived for ten years after the issue of the sixth edition, but so thoroughly had he winnowed his data, so fully had he met the expert criticism of his time, that he did not feel called upon to make any further alteration in its text.

Such is a brief account of how *The Origin of Species* came to be written. Its preparation occupied, from first to last, a period of forty years, for its foundation was being laid in 1832 when Darwin began his researches in South America, and its building was not finished until the last edition appeared in 1872. The book came into being during a period when Europe was in a state of intense intellectual activity, and the effect it produced was immediate and profound. The generation which felt its first shock is dying or dead. The generation which has grown up, like every new generation, is passing the household gods inherited from its predecessor through the fiery furnace of criticism. How is *The Origin of Species* to emerge from this ordeal? Having served its day and generation is it now dead? Or does it possess, within itself, the seeds of eternal youth and is it thus destined to become one of the world's perpetual possessions? The latter, I am convinced, is its destiny. On the foundations laid by Darwin in this book his successors have erected a huge superstructure which will be infinitely extended and modified as time goes on. Yet I feel certain that as long as men and

women desire to know something of the world into which they have been born, they will return, generation after generation, to drink the waters of evolutionary truth at the fountain-head.

The Origin of Species is still freely abused and often misrepresented, just as it was when Darwin was alive. In his final edition, here reprinted, he entered a mild protest—a luxury he rarely indulged in—against a misrepresentation to which his theory was persistently subjected. "But as my conclusions have lately been much misrepresented," he wrote, "and it has been stated that I attribute the modification of species exclusively to *natural selection*, I may be permitted to remark, that in the first edition of this work, and subsequently, I placed in a most conspicuous position—namely, at the close of the Introduction—the following words: *I am convinced that natural selection has been the main, but not the exclusive means of modification.* This has been of no avail. Great is the power of steady misrepresentation, but the history of science shows that fortunately this power does not long endure."

The power of error to persist is more enduring than Darwin thought; the misrepresentation of which he complained is being made now more blatantly than ever before. It is being proclaimed from the housetops that *The Origin of Species* contained only one new idea, and that this idea, the conception of natural selection, is false. Natural selection, some of his modern critics declare, is powerless to produce new forms of either plant or

animal. Darwin never said it could. In this book the reader will find him giving warning after warning that by itself selection can do nothing. To effect an evolutionary change two sets of factors, he declared, must be at work together—those which bring about variations or modifications in animal or in plant and those which favour and select the individuals which vary or become modified in a certain direction. Why should so many critics continue to misunderstand the essentials of Darwin's theory of evolution?

Men do not wilfully persist in misrepresentation; there must be some explanation of their error. The truth is that Darwin himself was at fault; the full title he gave to his book was *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection.* Plainly such a title was a misnomer, this book was and is much more than such a title implies; it was much more than a mere demonstration of the action of natural selection, it was the first complete demonstration that the law of evolution holds true for every form of living thing. It was this book which first convinced the world of thoughtful men and women that the law of evolution is true. Long before Darwin's time men had proclaimed the doctrine of evolution, but they failed to convince their fellows of its truth, both because their evidence was insufficient and because they had to leave so much that was unexplained. Darwin, on the other hand, brought forward such an immense array of facts in this book and set them in such a logical sequence

that his argument proved irresistible. He never resorted to any kind of special pleading, but permitted facts to speak for themselves. However longingly his readers clung to age-long beliefs, Darwin compelled them to face facts and draw conclusions, often at enmity with their predilections. We all desire to be intellectually honest, and sooner or later truth wins. It was this book which won a victory for evolution, so far as that victory has now been won. When it appeared in the nineteenth century the Why and the How of evolution were immaterial issues. What had to be done then was to convince men that evolution represented a mode of thinking worthy of acceptation and in that *The Origin of Species* succeeded beyond all expectation. Nor has it finished its appointed mission. No book has yet appeared that can replace it; *The Origin of Species* is still the book which contains the most complete demonstration that the law of evolution is true.

This, then, is Darwin's essential service to the world—not that he discovered the law of Natural Selection—but that he succeeded in effecting a complete revolutioh in the outlook of mankind on all living things. He wrought this revolution through this book. Darwin himself formed a true estimate of what the nature of this revolution was. In the last paragraph of his Introduction, readers will find a statement of what he claimed to have done. "Although much remains obscure," he writes, "and will long remain obscure, I can

entertain no doubt, after the most deliberate study and dispassionate judgment of which I am capable, *that the view which most naturalists until recently entertained, and which I formerly entertained —namely, that each species has been independently created—is erroneous. I am firmly convinced that species are not immutable.*" From this statement we see that Darwin's aim was to replace a belief in special creation by a belief in evolution, and in this he did succeed, as every modern biologist will readily admit. No one was in a better position to measure what Darwin succeeded in doing than his magnanimous contemporary and ally Alfred Russel Wallace. Writing to Professor Newton of Cambridge in 1887, five years after Darwin's death, he penned the following passage: "I had the idea of working it out [the theory of natural selection], so far as I was able, when I returned home, not at all expecting that Darwin had so long anticipated me. I can truly say now, as I said many years ago, that I am glad it was so, for I have not the love of work, experiment and detail that was so pre-eminent in Darwin and without which anything I could have written *would never have convinced the world.*" Darwin succeeded in convincing the world not only by his superabundance of proof but by the transparently honest way in which he presented his case. No one can read *The Origin of Species* without feeling that Darwin had the interests of only one party at heart—his client, Truth.

Darwin succeeded in convincing scientific men

that the law of evolution is true of all living things and yet the manner in which evolution takes place——the machinery of evolution, described in this book—may be totally wrong. If this were really so, *The Origin of Species* would be altogether out of date. Some critics have insinuated as much.—But was Darwin wrong in his conception of the mode of evolution? Let us look into this. Suppose, for a moment, that an omniscient biologist, greatly daring, were to re-edit this classic—would he find much that needs alteration? Scarcely a single fact would have to be withdrawn; so accurate was Darwin in making his own observations and so careful was he in the selection of his authorities, that the modern reader may accept all his statements of fact without question. But what of his "mode" or method of evolution? The machinery involved—is it out of date? My deliberate opinion is that the machinery of evolution described in this book is not out of date and never will be. Darwin perceived that two factors are concerned in evolution—one is "productive," the other is "selective." The productive factor gives rise to the materials of evolution—the points or characters wherein one individual differs from another—whether that individual be a plant or a human being. Such differences Darwin names "variations." How are such variations produced? In every chapter of this book the reader will find Darwin declaring that he does not know; the only point of which he felt certain was that individual differences do not arise

by chance. He was of opinion that food, climate, and habit are concerned in the production of variations, but he also realised that there were other causes of variation inherent in the living tissues of plants and animals. Every year we are coming to know more and more concerning the production of variations; we begin to see that development and growth are regulated by an extremely complicated series of interacting processes. When we have come to a full knowledge of these processes and can explain how "variations" are produced, will *The Origin of Species* then pass out of date? It will *not*, because Darwin made full allowance for the ignorance of his time and for future knowledge; what we discover now and what our successors will find out about the production of "variations" serves and will serve to add fuel to the fire kindled by Darwin; further discoveries cannot extinguish that fire. Our knowledge of the laws of heredity increases rapidly; Darwin expected such an increase and made allowance for it. He knew nothing of Mendel but he exemplifies the law now known by Mendel's name. However much our knowledge of heredity may progress, Darwin's position, as established in this book, will be but strengthened.

Thus we may regard the "productive" factor of Darwin's theory of evolution as fully established, but what of his "selective" factor? It has been often assailed, and many critics believe they have demolished it. Let readers judge for themselves. Let them watch the flock of sparrows which year after

year frequents their gardens and note the dangers to which its members are exposed, and draw their own conclusion as to the "survival of the fittest." Or let them read the travels of observant naturalists, and judge whether or not a struggle is a condition of all living things in a state of nature. The law is said not to hold true in the world of mankind. We may do our best to debrutalise and to humanise the struggle, but competition prevails. Even Trades Unions compete with one another for increase of membership. One business house unites with other business houses so that the combination may compete the more successfully with all rivals. There is competition between nations and between human races. We increase our knowledge not merely for the glory of knowing, but that we may compete the more successfully. No one who views mankind with unprejudiced eyes can say that Darwin's law of selection is out of date. There is competition and struggle throughout the whole of Nature's realm. Nor do I think it can ever pass out of date in any form of human society unless man deliberately resolves to give up the struggle of life. As to what will happen in such a case the law of evolution leaves us in no doubt. The species which gives up the struggle becomes extinct. The revolution in outlook, effected by this book, was not confined to men who study the history of animals and of plants. Its conquest gradually spread until every department of knowledge was affected. No matter what a man's line of study might be—the stars, the earth,

the elements, industry, economics, civilisation, theology or man himself—the inquirer soon began to realise that he must take the law of evolution as his guide. It was Darwin, through this book, who changed the outlook of all gatherers of knowledge and made them realise that behind the field of their immediate inquiry lay an immense evolutionary or historical background which had to be explored before further progress was possible. Nay, it was Darwin who made men see that evolution is now everywhere at work—in all things material, moral and spiritual, and will continue in operation, so far as the human mind can anticipate, to the very end of time.

A few months ago I had the daring to place Darwin in that small select group of great Englishmen which holds Shakespeare. My judgment was denounced as madly biased by men accustomed to adjudicate on literary reputations. When, however, we see how profoundly Darwin has altered and is altering the outlook of mankind, lifting from it, more than any man has ever done, the pall of superstition, my estimate of his greatness and of his universality will be seen to be nearer the truth than is now acknowledged. I know very well that Darwin's doctrine so far has reached only the intellectual stratum of mankind and has not yet percolated into the minds of the greater mass of humanity. Sooner or later Darwin's outlook will become universal, for men of all grades do desire to know the truth. Darwin's mission is not finished;

this book has still many years to live and many converts to make.

Far be it for me to say that *The Origin of Species* is an easy book to read. I have known it as student and man for a period of forty-five years and when I open it now, although I never fail to find fresh truths in it, I still find that its text requires the closest attention. What is the reason of this difficulty? It is not the style: this is clear and simple; it is not the terms used: Darwin never employs a technical word when a plain one is possible; it is not due to abstract thinking: Darwin clings always to the tangible or visible. The real explanation is its concentration; so much is packed into every sentence and every paragraph that the reader's mind becomes satiated unless he proceeds slowly and keeps his understanding busy. The book is, as Darwin declared it was, an abstract—an abstract of that greater work which was brought to such a sudden stop by the letter which Wallace sent from Ternate. Few men have taken out of this book all that is in it; critics often accuse Darwin of ignorance whereas it is their knowledge of this book which is at fault. It is never safe for a biologist to announce a discovery if he has not read and mastered *The Origin of Species*.

LITERARY CRITICISM

LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC

By Max Plowman

There's none so young but he retains the memory of a time when, suddenly perceiving a truth, he told his secret before reason had provided him with the armour to defend that truth against its corresponding combatant error. It was a sad experience. He blabbed, and error, being always armed, caught him and made such havoc with his ready-made defence that the fight was carried on right into the perceptive chambers of the mind, until he began to doubt what should never be doubted—an intuition. It is thus that truth is often overcome and remains bound and powerless until some happy experience calls forth the necessary defensive reason and truth again comes into its own.

To have the intuitions of one's youth established by reason and confirmed by experience is a fine compensation for increasing years. Life is worth living if it confirms our young and deep convictions; and it nearly always does this if we are patient and sincere and do not substitute poor makeshifts for those convictions we cannot at the moment fortify with reason. It is pardonable to hold a conviction

in suspense because of the weight of evidence against it; but to abandon a belief that was a source of inspiration is to suffer self-mutilation. Wounds heal, but limbs do not grow again, and the smallest vision is a limb for which no substitute can be found.

Let youth retain its vision: age will but confirm it.

Many years ago I discovered the delight of poetry. It became a passion so great I could not resist the temptation to declaim it to the solitude of my own room. And in doing so of course I found that poetry gained by being spoken aloud. The speaking human voice, I argued, was intended to be the instrument of beautiful sound. It seemed unreasonable that it should be silenced before its highest opportunities, and I could think of no valid reason why poetry should be confined to the covers of a book. Soundless poetry was an abstraction, due no doubt, to the swing of the pendulum from rhetoric; and though rhetoric was a pretence, I did not hate it as I hated—and still hate—an abstraction. In my innocence I believed that people had only to hear great verse articulated according to the rules of its composition and spoken with dignity and delight, and they would instantly recognise the voice of the human soul. I believed that poetry was the voice of the soul speaking more clearly and with greater intimacy than is possible to music or the plastic arts. Though I now know that false art has vitiated the taste of many, so that they like cleverness where they would normally have loved beauty, I still believe that

poetry is a convincing voice to any simple and sincere mind.

But it was my own pleasure and no argument that brought to my imagination a theatre where what I was pleased to call Lyrical Drama would be presented. I say "presented" and not acted, because the drama I imagined moved too deeply in the souls of the protagonists ever to be "acted" in the ordinary meaning of that word. I imagined a theatre that would provide a feast for the soul deeper and more nourishing even than that provided by the plays of Shakespeare.

I was insufficiently educated to have any theories. I loved the spoken word, and because it had been the spoken word of lyrical poetry which had stirred my imagination, I believed that nothing else would suffice for the rock on which this theatre was to be built.

The next step was to find the people who shared something of my belief, since among them, and among them only, could I hope to find those who might speak verse adequately. So with pains quite incommensurate with the result, I wrote a pamphlet. The printer christened it "Poetic Recitals," and I remember how readily I conceded my own title, *Readings of Verse*, to his abomination, thinking that if a dog were thoroughbred it didn't matter what name you gave him. The pamphlet declared that poetry was not a complete art until it was heard, that the methods of recitation suitable for doggerel and poor verse were quite unsuitable when

used for poetry, that impersonation in the delivery of lyrical poetry was ridiculous, and that therefore, since poetry was written to be heard, means should be devised whereby the speaker's personal appearance should be hidden while he was speaking the highest forms of lyrical poetry. Perhaps my idea was a reaction to maternal advice oft given, but I believed that poetry should be heard and not seen. At that time I did not even know that masks had ever been used for the drama.

Like a brave hot-gospeller I next posted the pamphlet to everybody in the world of literature whose name and address I could find in a year-book. I do not recommend this method of attack to any young person with a similar mission, because (I say it without malice) many people whose names appear in a literary year-book are more interested in a Stock Exchange price-list than in poetry. All the same, I received a number of interesting letters, and I still think it strange that they came from those whose opinions I had most reason to respect. I remember as one result of this propaganda being invited by a poet of repute to meet a company of his friends and expound my views. I was young and shy and could only have spoken freely upon a subject about which I was indifferent. Judge then of my double dumbness when confronted by the makers of what I most admired; grave men of twice and three times my years, any one of whom could most easily have filled a number of *The Quarterly* with his opinions upon the relation of

poetry to drama. Never, I imagine, has tiny craft sailed a straighter course into high rocks and disappeared into the water more silently!

I should probably have forgotten that evening but for the fact that I came away with a rather fantastical young man who was shortly to give me all the reassurance I wanted to support my convictions. For not long afterwards a performance of one of the Greek plays was given in London, and it was at that exhibition (it was indeed an exhibition, for the scenery, the dresses, the lighting and most of all the realistic acting, were exhibitive to a degree), that the fantastical young man, playing the part of the messenger, tore passion to tatters, bit the dust, made his body a contortion and his voice almost a vehicle of expectoration in the vain effort to get "live drama" out of a Greek play.

After that I hired a hall and experimented with speakers and curtains and lighting devices, trying at the same time to find those rare persons who had not only the physical endowment but those other and still rarer qualities that make the speaking of poetry a high interpretative art: trying also to discover a device that would lull all the senses save hearing and yet itself be unnoticeable. Ridiculous, amusing, interesting and memorable those evenings were by turns; but after I suppose a dozen of them the effort petered out.

It petered out because I could not find time to make a centre for both research and training. It petered out because one morning I awoke to

find an enterprising gentleman actually stealing my poor thunder, but with the efficiency of a publicity agent and for purposes which may be guessed but were not then apparent. It petered out chiefly because about that time I began to grope in the fog of "dramatic" and "non-dramatic," and dallied with the heresy that poetry and drama were different in substance. I could not continue while I was uncertain whether recitals of verse might lead to the drama of my imagination, or must inevitably end in a blind alley, because poetry and drama had no innate connection.

I was told that poetry was one thing and drama another: that a play might be very fine poetry but very poor drama: that action was the essence of drama and that unless the words advanced the action they were redundancies and should be cut: that lyrical poetry was by its nature undramatic, and that wherever a poetical drama showed lyrical tendency, the poet had lost his sense of the unities. I was told all that and a lot else I have happily forgotten, because it is all heresy.

For many years I lived under the shadow of that heresy. The other day it was suddenly dispelled and I discovered, with the surprise that always marks conviction, that all dramatic energy comes from the lyric source. Lyrical and dramatic art no more to be divided than the sea from the waves on its surface. Unless the lyric moves in the circle of song (in which case it gradually loses the limitations of speech until it becomes pure sound and is merged

in the music of pure sound) it cannot continue its course for long without becoming dramatic. What is called inspiration, that which knits the whole personality to the experience of intuitive perception, or vision, is the source from which all drama proceeds. At its birth it is always lyrical.

God sang, and man was born, purely lyrical. God continued to sing and Eve took form out of Adam; and so the drama of this planet began. The creation of every work of art is exactly after that model.

Lyric is one. Add one, or lyric again, and the answer is two, or drama. This is not believed because it is simple and at the same time very difficult to do. Modern drama is overcome with the miracle of one and one and will have it that one must be added to something utterly unlike itself for the production of anything so unlike "one" as "two." Consequently the modern dramatist begins at the end of his book of arithmetic, and after trying his hand at binomial theorem, the result is staged. It is usually, and very naturally, quite free from lyrical tendency.

There are heretics who believe that the Devil was self-begotten. They deny that all things were made by God and "without Him was not anything made that was made," for they say that if that were so, the world had remained lyrical. Milton, the lyric and dramatic poet, knew better. He showed the Devil to be God's dramatic masterpiece. The people who believe that lyrical poetry and drama

are different in substance are lost in the fog of that heresy. They short-circuit the drama, with horrid results.

Some time ago an English author, then writing poeticised drama for the stage, said: "It has been too often assumed that it is the manager who bars the way to poetic plays. But it is much more probable that the poets have failed the managers. If poets mean to serve the stage, their dramas must be dramatic." He could not have voiced the heresy more clearly. Poetry is a sheep and must go about in wolf's clothing if the manager is not to kill it.

Do poets "mean to serve the stage"? Not in that servile manner, I hope. For if ever the stage is to recover spiritual significance (and without that significance not even true comedy is possible) the stage must serve the poet as humbly and meticulously as the Tabernacle of the Israelites served the Ark of the Covenant in the wilderness. To speak of the poet serving the stage is to invert creative order, and that way lies chaos. The poet is the dramatic creator, and if he be called prose dramatist, then prose dramatist is only poet writ small. There is not one law for the poet and another for the playwright; neither is there one law for the poet and another for that uncreative piece of convenience—the stage. What is this stage that the poet must "serve"? Who made it? And for what purpose? And pray when did boards and footlights find their sentient soul to which the poet must be obedient? If the householder who "serves" the

house is a fool and a slave, how much more the poet who serves that which he should shape entirely to his own convenience? Even if this stage be made to include the manager, the producer, the scene-painter, the lime-lighter and God knows what other servants, there is still one law and one giver of the law. By no manner of jugglery, nor sinful waste of good temper can there ever come to be a committee of all these servants tied together so that they may appear as one man and endowed with the power to produce a work of art. Let the humblest poet, the lowliest playwright lift up his head. He is master of all he has strength to lay hands on. His rank is fixed: the Muses have given him divine right. Let him stand the stage on its head if it suits his purpose. Better still, let him abandon it and make one after his own heart's desire.

At its inception drama is always lyrical. All works of art begin to be made in the same way. When subjective feeling and objective recognition meet and mate, their nuptials are hymned by lyric song. The children of that marriage may be as many as the inhabitants of the earth, with as many names, characters and wills of their own; but they are all children of one parent and apart from that creative experience whose immediate expression is lyric song, not one of them had come to life. The characters of a true drama are all children of one parent. At its inception every play is a purely family affair; and though the generations that follow beget every diversity of individual, common

parentage must be acknowledged because that is the only true unity. In lyrical drama we are near the parent stock and the likeness will be easily recognised; but even in the most realistic drama, truly composed, common parentage will yet be acknowledged. Only in bastard works of art, where foundlings are picked up and herded together, will this unity be destroyed.

The lyrical is the spiritual voice. This same voice coming into touch with environment becomes dramatic: it is merely a question of proximity to the source. That which was lyrical becomes dramatic as it expends its force. Lyric is cause: drama, effect. All the attention in drama now is riveted on the effect: the cause is forgotten: it is even unknown. This process of decay comes inevitably to every art form when the fruit is required but the soil out of which the tree grows is neglected.

A new form must be made: a new tree must be grown. If true drama is to be revived, dramatists must get back to the cause, back beyond dramatic happenings to the lyric source from which they proceed. It is perfectly useless for the modern playwright to imagine that by speaking as it were through his nose, or by ventriloquial means, his voice will be dramatic. The street orator can show him a surer method.

Mr. Shaw has understood this. Endowed with all the natural gifts of the street orator, he has put his talents to excellent account. He understands that if you care passionately about anything your speech

will very soon become dramatic. Mr. Shaw's passions are intellectual, ascetic, moral, social and philanthropic. The one quality they lack is any profound spiritual significance. The lack of this quality in modern drama Mr. Shaw himself points out in the searching criticism of his preface to *Back to Methuselah*, which is one of the finest things he has ever written. But unfortunately the play that follows is as good an illustration as can be found of the spiritual inadequacy of modern drama both in form and content. The spiritual themes of *Methuselah* fall with deadly automatic insistence to the level of a debating club because, quite apart from any inherent poverty, it is impossible to present spiritual ideas in an intellectually argumentative form. Spiritual truth cannot be proved: it can only be demonstrated. To argue about spiritual truth is to go for ever "about it and about." When the finest social critic turned creator, his first need was to destroy his old weapons. Alas! in all his old and shining armour Mr. Shaw sallied forth to the conquest of Adam and Eve. Those heroic figures, big with poetic meaning to the merest child, have only to be seen through a single verse from the Book of Genesis for Mr. Shaw's grotesque to appear indecently devoid of their only *raison d'être*—spiritual significance. The censor did well to insist upon a covering for their nakedness. Naked walking minds are not a pleasant sight. They need the divine body, or spiritual form, which is poetry.

All art is primarily spiritual perception. If it be true that the spiritual is the lyrical voice, then that which is most purely spiritual will be most lyrical. However far we go from the spiritual source, the lyric impulse remains the deep out of which the countless waves of drama must proceed, ever spending their force as they break upon the shore. True drama, whether in tragedy or comedy, is the drama of the soul. Drama that is not lyrical in essence is not the drama of the soul. For though the soul must find expression, first in words, then in action, the cause lies deeper than either, and the cause is revealed in the lyric cry of recognition. Thence proceed all things: the full revelation of the vision within the soul, the power working on within the soul until it foreshadows the event, the heralding of that event by imaginative speech which creates the essential sympathy in the mind of the hearer, and finally—finally, fulfilment and death in action.

Action is the death of the drama. However paradoxical that may sound, it is demonstrably true. Beyond Lear's "Pray you undo this button," nothing is possible. The power is exhausted in action; indeed the action itself is exhausted. Action is the working out of lyrical impulse in terms of mortality: the expression of spiritual power in the terms of sense. In action the force expends itself. When the force is spent, action is complete: the circle is rounded.

That, surely, is the explanation of a Greek play. The Greeks, knowing that the attitude of spiritual

perception was necessary to the appreciation of sublime themes, made their plays in the forms most likely to arouse that perception. They knew that lyrical expression was the proper medium for spiritual truth and as a natural consequence, three parts of a Greek play is purely lyrical. They believed that when the spiritual atmosphere became sufficiently charged, action would result and bring the play to an end; but quite reasonably, this action was what they were least concerned about. All their efforts were directed towards the task of revealing spiritual forces in their protagonists and lyrical poetry is the only adequate medium for such a task. The presentation of events for such an object would have destroyed the spiritual chronology, but when they had fully presented the conflicting conditions of soul, the event happened. The inevitable event was the least important part of the play. They would not even allow it to disturb the spiritual atmosphere by showing the event on the stage. It was relegated to the mouth of the messenger who told it as a tale.

The trouble with the modern drama is that we have reversed this order of construction. We present the event and leave the cause to be deduced. Take an example. The Greeks would have conceded drama to the trial of a man for his life. They would have been most concerned to show the spiritual states of the accused and his accusers, and a messenger would have narrated the finding of the jury and the sentence of the judge. There the play

would have ended. But the same theme according to modern treatment begins with the representation of events at the scaffold, as for instance in Mr. Somerset Maugham's play, *The Letter*.

Shakespeare, of course, had both trial and scaffold; yet there is not a play of Shakespeare's that does not openly confess its lyric origin, returning to the lyric form constantly as to the source of spiritual being. Take from even *Macbeth*—a climacteric play in the history of drama—the lyrical choruses of the witches, the soliloquies and reveries of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, and what remains? A sordid tale of murders by a Scottish barbarian. But if a modern poet were to offer his *Macbeth* to a West London theatre it is *just those* choruses, soliloquies and reveries that he would be required to cut. Shakespeare's lyrical tendency is naturally his offence in the eyes of the modern stage. Concessions are still made and Hamlet is allowed most of his soliloquies; but the cinema treads on our heels and *Chu Chin Chow* has, I believe, no soliloquies.

What does it all mean? It means that modern drama has become a superficial entertainment comparable with the exhibitions of the cinematograph with which it unsuccessfully competes. Practically all modern plays are constructed on the Shakespearean model, only with this difference: in our frantic efforts to be more "dramatic" than Shakespeare, all spiritual significance has disappeared.

> The weak lay hands on what the strong has done
> Till that be tumbled that was lifted high.

The lyric strain is nowhere heard. The living form is worn to the bare bones. The bones are rattled and we call the rattling drama. It is time to bury them. It is time to forget Shakespeare, forget the stage, forget the Greeks, forget even the Church, and start afresh.

I sometimes wonder whether the Church retains the form of its service solely for the purpose of bearing witness against the stage. For every Sunday lyrical drama, abhorrent even in name to the average playgoer, is still attended by patient multitudes. They are unaware of the supreme irony, that although the form of drama they bless upon the first day of the week is one which they would curse on any of the remaining six, only its superb form keeps the drama of the Church from decay and disuse. Its form is a beautiful example of lyrical drama. And though it be but mouldering stone, what a magnificent monument it makes! What an indictment of the jazz-band vertiginous drama! The singing of the *Magnificat* by a village choir is a more truly dramatic performance than any exhibitive play of the modern stage. Why? Because, having spiritual significance, it makes the primary acknowledgment to lyrical impulse and moves us with beauty of form which mechanised vitality is powerless to achieve.

The spectacular exhibition, the sensational effect, the arguments, the badinage, the trap-door entrances and exits, the coincidence of physical bodies, the elaborately arranged surprises and climaxes which are all part of the stock-in-trade of the modern

mechanical play, have essentially no more of true drama in them than a railway accident. We suffer them for want of something better. I believe that "something better" can be fashioned out of our appreciation of poetry when we have full assurance of faith that poetry and drama are of the same stuff. What we have to be rid of is our suspicion of lyrical impulse. At present, no sooner has a poet begun to write upon a theme that would dramatise itself if continued in, than he pulls himself up, and in a falsely humble desire to "serve the stage," begins to wonder whether what he has written is sufficiently "dramatic."

The Muses do not like that kind of questioning. They leave him to his tinkering and he patches the whole thing up with artifice. Is it a wonder that we are bored by such "poetic" plays? They fall between two stools, between inspiration and pure mechanism, being neither spiritually nor mechanically dramatic. They but confirm us in the old heresy that poetry and drama are natural enemies. But let the lyrical origin of drama be acknowledged, let the lyric form be maintained just so long as it has purpose and significance, and chatter about "advancing the action" will cease: indeed, the effort of the dramatist will again be towards the elimination of unmeaning movement. When that happens we shall perhaps see the spiritual drama, now moribund in the Church, unfold itself with a dignity and intensity that touches the sublime.

WILLIAM MORRIS

By Alfred Noyes

William Morris, "poet, artist, manufacturer, and socialist," was born on 24th March, 1834. He went up to Exeter College, Oxford, in January 1853, with a considerable knowledge and love of architecture, poetry, and old stories. He went up at a time when "all reading men were Tennysonians; and all sets of reading men talked poetry"; when, moreover, the spirit of Darwin was brooding over the intellectual world and the Crimean war was about to set the younger generation thinking about schemes of social regeneration. All creeds and systems were going into the intellectual melting-pot. Nothing was a very sure refuge for the mind but the beauty of the visible world as revealed and made enduring in art. Everything else appeared to be changing, decaying, passing away. The visible world itself was not so beautiful as it had once been. Art was the consoler of the pessimists and the redeemer of the optimists. Ruskin was the prophet of the new religion, "the religion of beauty"; and hundreds that had grown sick of the controversial wrangles of the time were turning to

it for relief with all the passion which their forefathers would have felt in seeking the consolations of the Church. Morris himself, when he came up to Oxford, has been described as a High Churchman and a Neo-Catholic. It may very confidently be affirmed that he was neither more nor less than a worshipper of beauty, and that the ritual of the Church was nothing more or less to him than a form of style.

'Twas in Church on Palm Sunday
Listening what the priest did say
Of the kiss that did betray,

That the thought did come to me
How the olives used to be
Growing in Gethsemane.

That the thoughts upon me came
Of the lantern's steady flame,
Of the softly whispered name.

Of how kiss and words did sound
While the olives stood around,
While the robe lay on the ground.

Then the words the Lord did speak
And that kiss in Holy Week
Dreams of many a kiss did make:

Lovers kiss beneath the moon,
With it sorrow cometh soon:
Juliet's within the tomb:

Angelico's in quiet light,
'Mid the aureoles very bright
God is looking from the height.

There the monk his love doth meet;—

and so forth, he wrote, in a poem which he sent to Cormell Price (not included in any of his volumes). And it is obvious that he was not exactly listening to "what the priest did say" from a "High Churchman's" point of view, but simply and solely from the point of view of an artist. Even in church he was striving to build a "shadowy isle of bliss mid-most the beatings of the steely sea." He was probably aided and abetted in this by the great friendship of his Oxford days which is, prehaps, the most important fact of that period of his life—the friendship he formed with Burne-Jones, who had also gone up to Exeter College in 1853.

He was "aided and abetted," I say, because I do not think he was influenced very much by Burne-Jones or by any one else. His life has a very extraordinary completeness and coherence. It is a happy chance that the whole childhood of William Morris may be seen at a glance, as on a single splendid fragment of his own romance-empurpled tapestry. About the year 1841, any one wandering near Woodford Hall, on the borders of Epping Forest, and within sight of the clear Thames, with its "white and ruddy-brown sails moving among cornfields," might have been surprised by the vision of a curly-haired young knight in glittering armour, riding through the strange glades of hornbeam on one of Titania's palfreys, a pony such as in fairy-land might have been "tethered to a poppy or stabled in a tree." But here, in broad noon, it was

pacing proudly beneath a greaved and breastplated young warrior from Joyous Gard, a child-champion shining through the fairy-fringes of that sunny nook of unspoilt England, like some virgin star through the branches of Broceliande, in quest of the "beauty folded up in forests old!" The small knight-errant was, of course, no ghost of Galahad or Percivale, but the future poet of the *Earthly Paradise*; and his age was about seven summers.

The prosaic interpretation of this picture is that he had been given a toy suit of armour; but as he made such use of it we may safely assume that it corresponded to a desire of his own; and, indeed, it seems in a sense the natural outcome, the glittering crystallisation as it were, of all the other external facts and features of his childhood's kingdom—that wonderful Wood beyond our world's end, which can only be entered upon the wings of poetry, but can never even be approached along the crawling highways of reason. The picture is worthy of note, because it really does help to establish at the outset the spiritual continuity of Morris's life, and to show, for instance, that Mr. Swinburne was justified in saying of Morris's first volume, *The Defence of Guenevere*: "It seems to have been now lauded and now decried as the result and expression of a school rather than a man, of a theory or tradition than a poet . . . those who so judged were blind guides. Such things as were in this book are taught and learnt in no school but that of instinct. Upon no piece of work in the world was the impress of

native character ever more distinctly stamped, more deeply branded."

It may not be inappropriate here to say a word about the technique of that first book. On a question of this kind it is only with great diffidence that one would care to dissent from Mr. Swinburne, who finds it to be blundering and stumbling, and altogether very faulty, and regards Morris very much as an amateur in the matter of the craft of versification. The merit of the book—according to Mr. Swinburne—lies almost entirely in its passion, emotional depth, and truth. But this is probably due to the fact that Morris aimed at something very different from the aims of Mr. Swinburne. He never attempted to write lines "of their own arduous fullness reverent." He often deliberately ignored the aids to that fullness which are given by elision; and elision — Mr. Swinburne says — is a law, not a privilege. But Morris aimed at an effect which he chould only obtain by his own methods. His verses should be read slowly, almost syllable by syllable, with due regard to their child-like *naïveté*, and the reader will soon perceive that a poem like *The Defence of Guenevere*, with its extraordinarily overlapping lines, and rhymes so unexpected that at first sight they seem rambling and bungling, is a consummate work of art. The feverish wanderings of the half-distraught queen's speech could not have been rendered more magnificently than in this curiously-wrought piece of *terza-rima*. On the subject of Morris's verse we are compelled to differ

from Mr. Swinburne, though we cannot enter into the matter very fully here.

Never was Art more the child of Memory than in the case of William Morris. His early days at Woodford Hall were, consciously or unconsciously, a fount of inspiration to the end of his life. The self-contained mediæval system of the house and the old festivals that it observed must have meant a good deal to the imaginative youngster who made it his playground. Twelfth Night was one of the great days of the year at Woodford Hall, and the masque of St. George was always then presented with considerable elaboration. It is probably not too fanciful to say that this determined the character of some of the masque-like poems in Morris's first volume and, perhaps, even of the later morality play, *Love is Enough*. Those who know childhood best will be the most likely to go further and say that some of the peculiarly vivid hunting, roasting, and feasting passages in *Jason* derive some of their glamour from that early proximity of Epping Forest, and the fact that as a child William Morris was allowed to roast the rabbits and fieldfares which he shot for his own supper. It was an affair of the imagination even in those earliest days; for we are told that his great ambition was to shoot his game with bow and arrows. Like most great men, Morris retained his childhood to an exceptional degree; and, with all due deference to the critics, who find a more solemn import in the mere fact that he endeavours "to take up the lost threads of

the mediæval artistic tradition," I can only see him still "making believe," attempting to build his shadowy isle of bliss, yearning to shoot his game with bow and arrows, and striving to recapture the happiness of his own childhood's kingdom.

Morris's father had a great liking for the old churches in the neighbourhood of Woodford Hall, with their monuments and brasses; and his young son used to accompany him on visits to them. When he was eight years old William Morris was taken to see Canterbury. On the same holiday he saw the church of Minster in Thanet, and it is said that fifty years later, never having seen it in the interval, he described the church in some detail from that memory. "Gothic architecture" could have been little more than a romantic phrase to him at that age; yet if his father really loved it and spoke simply to him about it, a spire might seem more like a soaring prayer to a child than anything built with hands could seem to a man. At any rate the glorious impression that the individual scenes left upon him is indubitable. It must be remembered that they meant—at the very least—great pillars and dark aisles and stained glass and dim rich streaming lights over cold mysterious tombs. It must be remembered that they meant curious inscriptions and strange recumbent figures in eternal armour, with frozen swords and stark upturned feet. The memory certainly survives in the *Guenevere* volume, and gives it much of its atmosphere. The *naïveté* of some of its language

is that of a child rather than of the Middle Ages. For instance, when Rapunzel sings—

My mother taught me prayers
  To say when I had need;
I have so many cares,
  That I can take no heed
Of many words in them;
  But I remember this:

was ever the very spirit of childhood voiced so perfectly as in the lines that follow—though the child itself be only seen through a stained-glass window darkly?—

Yet besides *I have made this*
By myself: Give me a kiss,
Dear God, dwelling up in heaven!

. . . . .

Yea, besides, I have made this:
Lord, give Mary a dear kiss,
And let gold Michael, who look'd down,
When I was here, on Rouen town
From the spire, bring me that kiss
On a lily! Lord do this!

It is curious, too, how the dumb stone of *King Arthur's Tomb* seems to make almost a third character in that wonderful interview between Guenevere and Lancelot. The tomb itself is hardly mentioned, but the reader gradually gets an almost physical realisation of its palpable and stony presence; and, though it was in later years that Morris acquired his knowledge, one may quite safely affirm it to have been his childhood that gave the glamour when he wrote—

Edward the king is dead, at Westminster
The carvers smooth the curls of his long beard.

This atmosphere pervades the whole of Morris's first volume, and though it may be said to belong to the manner of his school, it belongs also to an architectural region which the other Pre-Raphaelite poets left comparatively unexplored, a region into which it may quite justly be said that Morris first wandered in his own childhood and apart from any influence but that of his own father.

In the childhood of most impressionable people there are usually one or two moments, events, or landmarks of which the memory is as vivid throughout the whole of their lives as the foot-prints on the sand in *Robinson Crusoe.* It is probable, for instance, that Stevenson in his childhood had been tremendously impressed, and perhaps terrified, by some blind beggar with a tapping stick like those that appear in *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped.* However that may be, there are two early imprints upon the mind of William Morris that probably —taken with the rest of his early environment— would count for quite as much in determining his choice of the Middle Ages for his "form of style" as any later influence. One of these is the fact that when he lived at Woodford Hall there were stocks and a cage there on a bit of wayside green in the middle of the village; and he himself has said, in a letter to his daughter, that he used to regard them with considerable terror and decidedly preferred to walk on the other side of the road. To my mind there is not the slightest doubt that this early and imaginative dread is responsible for

the extraordinarily vivid sense of terror with regard to such instruments which he displays in depicting Sir Peter Harpdon's torture. The second of these foot-prints on the sand he has recorded in his *Lecture on the Lesser Arts of Life*: "Well I remember as a boy my first acquaintance with a room hung with faded greenery at Queen Elizabeth's Lodge, by Chingford Hatch, in Epping Forest, and the impression of romance that it made upon me! a feeling that always comes back on me when I read Sir Walter Scott's *Antiquary* and come to the description of the Green Room at Monkbarns, amongst which the novelist has imbedded the fresh and glittering verses of the summer poet Chaucer: yes, that was more than upholstery, believe me."

It is quite possible that here we have Morris's first little private gateway into the greenwoods of Chaucer. At any rate, it is quite obvious that all his adventures were really his own, and that he made his own discoveries of beauty as he went along his own winding path. As a rule it is not profitable to indulge in such conjectures and suggestions as the foregoing; but the case of Morris is exceptional; and as he has been so often treated in the Pre-Raphaelite manner as one of a school, it becomes all the more desirable to show the unity and continuity of his intellectual life. Not only were his sense-perceptions extremely acute, but his memory of them and all their associations was extraordinary. It was not only big things like churches that he was able to remember for fifty

years after seeing them once in childhood. "To this day," wrote Morris in his latter years, "the smell of May reminds me of going to bed by daylight." Those who fully understand what such a remark implies will also understand what we mean by saying that Woodford Hall, his early home, was the germ of all Morris's later work. He extended the boundaries of his world; but he never shifted its centre. Woodford Hall, with the clear Thames flowing past its door, and the scents of the May-tide in its garden, and the bloom of the plums upon its walls, was at the heart of all his works, even when he became a Socialist. It thrust itself up through his theories like the boughs of the Branstock through the hall of the Niblungs. More perhaps than any other English poet, Morris gives expression to that emotion which Tennyson called "the passion of the past." In Morris this passion is intense to the point of pain. It appears under many disguises. His Utopias of the past, though he projected them into the future, were in many of their aspects hardly more than a lyrical cry for his own dead days. His tales of the Middle Ages are as it were remembered from a past of nearer date, a past in which he had himself lived. Woodford Hall was the nucleus of that "shadowy isle of bliss" which William Morris was ever afterwards striving to build—for himself and for others—midmost the beatings of the world's bitter and steely sea. At Kelmscott Manor, which he loved so dearly that he broke down when forced to leave it; or

on a tub at Hammersmith, that was his only strife —to realise the Earthly Paradise. The Earthly Paradise was enough for him. He, indeed, desired no golden groves or quiet seats of the just. The sights and sounds and scents of the immediate May-time were all that he desired. But these, with the youth that seemed necessary to complete them, were ever passing away. *Passing Away* is the burden of his poetry—so much so that one might almost say it is possessed with the long anguish of the fear of death. The only philosophical utterance he ever made about the matter was that perhaps change and death were necessary or there would be no good stories—our finest stories being those that told of oldest and saddest happenings. And when he was brought face to face with the fact that he could not "make quick-coming death a little thing, or bring again the pleasure of past years," he turned instinctively to the Middle Ages as a permanent and definite form of style, beyond the reach of change, whereby he might embody what he loved and raise it above the beatings of that bitter sea. He turned to the Middle Ages not as a mere æsthete seeking an anodyne, but as a child turns to fairyland. It was his method of removing what he loved out of space and time in order to view it in the light of eternity. He deliberately adopted the convention that made Troy a belfried town like Bruges and Chartres, because he felt that this, too, was another method of defying time, and that he had thus in some strange way the power of building

himself a continuing city. He felt an altogether modern and scholarly pleasure in the anachronism, a little shock of delight as he brought the facts of history into collision and resolved the resultant discord into harmony by a deeper note. He felt a peculiarly modern pleasure as his fabled cities rose, to music, a pleasure that separates him by many centuries from Chaucer (to whom he is often very carelessly likened) on the one hand; while there is a depth of sincere feeling, a passionate desire, a reality of self-expression, living and breathing through it all which entirely differentiates his work from that of the perverse and paradoxical æsthetes who followed him. His world is an entirely remembered one; and it is largely this that gives his work vitality, and sets it apart from the work of Wardour Street connoisseurs. It is Morris's craving to capture the golden moments that slipped out of his own living hands (a craving of the same kind as that expressed by Keats in his Odes) which lifts his work, not so much in great single lines as in its whole wistful atmosphere, to the level of high poetry. It is this that fills it with the light of that Eternity which he always refrained from attempting to fathom; and it is this that allows one to see in his pictures of earthly beauty that high intellectual passion which, conscious or unconscious, is the first essential to great art. First and last, art is religion. There is no room in it for preciosity—no room in it for anything but the Eternal. There was no preciosity in William Morris's choice of the Middle

Ages as his " form of style." He turned to them quite naturally, as world-weary men turn to their childhood, knowing perhaps that except as a little child in glittering armour he could not enter into his Kingdom of Heaven.

WALTER BAGEHOT

By George Sampson

The writer of literary miscellanies is a suspected person. For casual skimming in a weekly or monthly review he is all very well; but has he any right to the comparative eternity of publishers' cloth? His matter smells of the common-place book, his method suggests the pump-handle. He thinks in paragraphs, sorts the world into pages, and sees men as columns walking. We doubt his authority; he writes, but does he know? The first essential of good writing is the having of something to say, a condition often unfulfilled in the case of the miscellaneous author. Knowledge is the mother of eloquence in literature, just as, unfortunately, necessity is the mother of invention. If you are to transfer something of life into your book, you must know life and not merely the vital statistics accessible in the books of others. An original writer, is inspired by life, an imitative author by literature. The one reports at first hand, the other at second, or fifth, hand. The work of the one is vital, the work of the other vitiated by inbreeding and the consumption of breathed air.

Thus the better part of the world prefers its men of letters to be men of experience as well, and not mere literary dilettanti who shrink from contact with reality. How far the preference is sound can be decided by a rapid review of the varied, and sometimes tumultuous careers of many great writers.

Now this is specially applicable to the case of Walter Bagehot, first because he was a miscellaneous writer who has survived by his fitness, next because he happened to be a distinguished man of affairs as well as a distinguished man of letters, and next because he has expressed, in his own incisive way, the general sense of the world in such matters. Shakespeare is to him a type of the "experiencing mind" with a store of first-hand observation as material, while Southey represents the mere man of letters, the literary manufacturer, who lived in a vacuum, and with painful industry wrote poetry before breakfast, philosophy before lunch, and history before dinner. Certainly there was no keener man of the world than Bagehot himself. He knew men, he knew politics, he knew business; and that knowledge is revealed in all he wrote. His essays are alive because he was alive; his financial theory is intelligent because he was a financier in practice; and his constitutional philosophy is sound because he knew both politics and politicians. Without "the vision and the faculty divine," mere experience is of course almost valueless in literature; but with "the accomplishment of words," experience makes a powerful combination.

Bagehot (whose name, by the way, should be pronounced as if written Badge-ot) was born at Langport in Somerset on 3rd February, 1826, of distinguished banking lineage. His father was managing director and vice-chairman of the famous Stuckey's Bank, whose notes were so familiar in the West of England that true Somerset men have been know to reject the foreign and suspicious paper of Threadneedle Street and to demand payment "in Stuckey." Indeed, there was finance on both sides of the family, for his mother was also a Stuckey; and she contributed to the joint stock not only further banking traditions, but a highly cultivated interest of her own and of her relatives in scientific inquiry and pursuits. The future author of *Physics and Politics* certainly owed much of his keen interest in scientific speculation to the influence of his maternal relatives. He was educated first at a Bristol school, and then at University College, London, where one of his friends was R. H. Hutton, afterwards editor of the *Spectator*, whose charming memorial essay is the chief authority for details of Bagehot's life. He took the mathematical scholarship with his Bachelor's degree at London University in 1846, and the gold medal in Intellectual and Moral Philosophy with his Master's degree two years later. These distinctions indicate some of the predilections and influences of his youth, but, as usual, much should be set down to the account of time and place. Bagehot's most impressionable years were spent in London and

during the forties, with Cobden and Newman as the main lines of influence. The family Unitarianism that prevented him from going to Oxford must be counted as a fortunate circumstance; for to such a mind as Bagehot's the "now" of London was better than the "once" of Oxford. He did not, however, completely escape the influence of Oxford, for that lovely city with its remote and cloistral atmosphere was personified in John Henry Newman, whose winsome poetry captivated Bagehot, as so many more, and compelled him to an interest in the problems that troubled Rome's most distinguished convert.

To a temperament like Bagehot's, the merely sentimental appeal of Rome counted for something, but not for much. That it had an effect certain verses remain to prove; but this disturbance is an almost inevitable phase—sometimes the first, sometimes the last phase—of the religious mind; and Bagehot's possession of a religious mind is proved by the fact that his views underwent a change. That the change, from the orthodox point of view, was in the direction of breadth rather than intensity makes no difference. The unquestioning acceptance of a form of faith as a sort of geographical circumstance is a mark, not of the religious, but of the merely passive mind. The challenging and the changing of early religious prepossessions is at least a sign that the mind has been troubled by deep matters, and is anxious for the truth. While, then, the sentimental aspect of Rome had some effect

upon Bagehot, the real secret of its attraction lay in the historical, the pragmatic glamour of the Catholic Church. Rome, to him, was a polity justified, on the whole, by its consequences. A constitutional system that had worked through a past of wonderful history and continued to work in a changed and changing present, would certainly seem to deserve the respect, and almost the adherence, of a mind predisposed to political considerations.

Fortunately, however, Newman was not the sole interest of his college years. London was ringing with the strife of Free Trade against Protection; and whatever else this question may have been, it was certainly actual and vital. Whether the Church of Rome was the rightful representative of the primitive apostolic foundation was no doubt an important matter; but whether bread should be too dear to buy had at least an appearance of superior urgency. It was a primitive question of a different kind. Bagehot and Hutton pursued Cobden and Bright and other Free Trade heroes in their oratorical progress, and diligently discussed their speeches by the standards of Chatham and Burke. The enthusiasm thus enkindled never died away. Free Trade remained with Bagehot as a real dynamic interest, the charm of Newman asserting itself rather as a sentimental, literary influence; so that, to take an instance of their divergence, Sir Robert Peel, who presently became little better than one of the ungodly to Newman and his kind, commanded Bagehot's increasing respect, and is the

subject of appreciative consideration in one of his best essays.

In the friendship between Bagehot and that most tragic of Newman's disciples, Arthur Hugh Clough, something of the master's influence may perhaps be seen; but the common interest was philosophical rather than theological, and the connection was actually formed in the unecclesiastical atmosphere of University College, to which Clough had come as Principal of a hall of residence. Between Clough, with his cloistral instincts thwarted by sceptical convictions, and Bagehot, with his sanguine, practical interest in the world of men, there would seem, at first sight, to be no point of contact; but the philosophic quietism of Clough found an answer in the younger man's instinctive dislike of extremes, especially of emotional extremes; and their actual literary practice suggests a further likeness. They were both serious men with a vein of humour that tinged their wisdom, now with gaiety and now with cynicism. The sardonic asides of the Literary Studies find a counterpart in such poems as *The Latest Decalogue*; and if Bagehot is one of our most high-spirited essayists, *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* is one of our most pleasant pieces of poetic gaiety. The strength of the friendship is but feebly indicated in Bagehot's chilly essay on the poet, which has even more than the writer's usual restraint upon his feelings, and dissipates at the end, as if he were afraid of opening his heart, into a rather superfluous account of the *Amours de Voyage*. For the

truth about Clough it is not to this essay by one of his closest friends that we must turn.

In 1851 Bagehot went to Paris and lived through the stirring times of the *coup d'état* by which the President, Louis Napoleon, overthrew the Republic, and secured the perpetuation of his power under the title of Napoleon III., Emperor of the French. Bagehot's cynical and unexpected approval of this political crime was expressed in a series of letters that appalled his friends and almost extinguished the respectable Unitarian paper to which he had been rashly asked to contribute. He was not quite twenty-six; he was of the eager, sanguine temperament whose defect it is to run into cocksureness; his Liberalism (such as it was) did not at any time of his life exclude a whole-hearted contempt for the masses: hence his rather Nietzschean approval of Louis Napoleon—really a man of sawdust, yet, at the moment, strong enough, as it seemed, to tread down the mutable many who, being French, were silly precisely because they were not stupid. "I think M. Bonaparte," he writes in a letter to Hutton, "is entitled to great praise. He has very good heels to his boots, and the French just want treading down, and nothing else—calm, cruel, businesslike oppression, to take the dogmatic conceit out of their heads." And so, with characteristic cynicism, and with characteristic eagerness for experience, Bagehot helped the Republicans, whom he despised, to build barricades against the man whom he admired.

This episode of his early manhood is additional evidence of the hardness that somewhat mars his work—hardness, remember, not bluntness. His temper was of steel—keen, resilient, but undeniably hard. He seemed impatient of emotion and suspicious of any action born of its influence. He was, in fact, an example of excessive rationalism; and the defect of excessive rationalism is that it is excessively unreasonable. Reason looks well on paper; but in reality we have scanty grounds for assuming that reason is a better guide to life than feeling. Reason is certainly triumphant, and feeling as certainly annihilated in the science with which, in his lifetime, Bagehot's name was specially connected. He was a financier and economist. While he admired Adam Smith (upon whom he has written a very delightful essay), his respect for Ricardo was warmer still. Now the defect (or merit—so much depends upon point of view) of Ricardo and his school is that they dehumanised what is after all a matter of human concern. They wrote as if the world were peopled by man and not by men, and as if that world were the fictitious realm of pure mechanics, where elasticity is perfect, where friction is unknown, and where you may always neglect the weight of the elephant. Bagehot recognised quite fully this serious limitation of economic science, and defended it as a necessary method of inquiry. From that point of view he is right; but in this study, almost beyond any other, there is a constant temptation to take abstractions as

realities. No one could live in the rigid, frictionless world of pure mechanics; yet people constantly talk, and even act, as if we did live in the world of pure economics. After all, the father of the science was wiser than his followers when he called his treatise *The Wealth of Nations*, and considered his subject, not as a separate entity, but as a mere aspect of the whole human science into the scheme of which he tried to fit it. Bagehot suffered from economic degeneration of the heart. For the "still, sad music of humanity" he had no ear. Shakespeare's scorn of the rude mechanicals is music to him, and in any discussion of capital and labour, he is not only on the side of capital—as he might reasonably be, but he is patently contemptuous of labour, as no true economist should be. Here again the abstractions of science are a source of confusion. Much of the absurdity that results from argument about capital and labour is due to our incorrigible dialectic habit of dividing things into two abstract and mutually exclusive parts, and then assuming that the abstractions are facts. Labour does no more in the world's work, Bagehot argues in the *Economic Studies*, than the compositors do in producing *The Times*; whereas Capital is like the editor who, by shaping a policy, choosing this, and rejecting that, actually makes the paper. This would be a hard world for most of us, if we had to be judged by our metaphors; but that Bagehot was satisfied with such an illustration shows the depth of unreality into which a pure economist can

sink; for he overlooks not only the fact that the editor, as such, is already part of the labour, but this: that if the editor could (as in fact he cannot) dispense with all assistance, and produce and distribute the paper single-handed, he would cease to be part of the labour, and become all of it. The economist, even more than the author, is a person who lives in a vacuum and takes no account of mankind.

Bagehot had at first intended to practise at the Bar, to which he was called in 1852; but during his stay in Paris he abandoned the career of "law and bad jokes till we are forty" (as Dizzy has it), and began serious work at the family calling. Business, he said, is more amusing than pleasure; and he gravely declared that dabbling his hands in a heap of sovereigns was a certain cure for the megrims. His amusing business fortunately did not engross all his energies, for he found time to write a series of articles for the *Prospective Review* and the *National*—the latter of which he assisted in editing. His marriage in 1858 to a daughter of the Right Hon. James Wilson, founder of the *Economist*, was a factor of much importance in his life; for, apart from the domestic happiness that ensued, the connection with Wilson gave him an inside intimacy with the world of high politics. When his father-in-law went to India as Financial Member of the Council, Bagehot succeeded him in the editorial chair of the *Economist*, and held it till his own death in 1877. Politics had always been a strong

interest of the Bagehot family; moreover politics and finance are near neighbours—when they are not the same thing. As editor of the *Economist* Bagehot came into closer touch with the machine and gained the knowledge of its working that helps to give his little book on the Constitution a classic authority.

There is little more to say of Bagehot's external life. He tried more than once to get into Parliament, but was never actually returned. On the whole this is well. He belonged really to neither of the great parties. He was, to use his own phrase, "between sizes in politics." He was a vigorous Free Trader and could never have worked with a Tory party that still hankered after Protection, and he was too remote from sympathy with democracy ever to have been a good Liberal. For us this detachment is pure gain, and makes him, in his political essays, the friendly foe of Conservatives and the "damned good-natured friend" of Liberals. His robust mind was housed in an apparently robust body—though far less robust than was imagined, for he died suddenly on 24th March, 1877, at the early age of fifty-one.

Bagehot's work has the brilliance of a diamond; but it has also its adamantine hardness. This is generally a defect of the critical spirit. Where criticism ends and creation begins would evade the nicest of definitions. In a sense, all literature is criticism, since it is an account of how life strikes an observer. Learned gentlemen of the academic

type, accustomed to the pigeon-holing of literature, have been driven to querulous discontent by Matthew Arnold's dictum that poetry is a criticism of life. But Arnold's judgment was sound, and was wrong only in being restricted. Not poetry alone, but all literature, all great literature, is a criticism of life. However, though we may not be able to state the difference in a definition, yet we feel that that there is a kind of literature that is critical rather than creative. To the category of criticism all Bagehot's work belongs. He is the purely critical spirit of the mid-Victorian era as Samuel Butler was of its close. To borrow a phrase from his own world, he audited the accounts of politics and letters, and wrote a vigorous report on the balance or deficit. Now the perfect accountant is passionless, and therefore sometimes grotesquely wrong. Not long ago, a government auditor, in reviewing the accounts of an education authority responsible for the feeding of necessitous children, reported adversely upon the expenditure of money in apples and bananas. A child, it appeared, might have an apple in a dumpling, for that was food and therefore a necessity; but not an apple by itself, for that was fruit and therefore a luxury. It is in just such a way as this that the critical spirit goes wrong. As a general fact, no writer creates according to rule—those who, like Wordsworth, think they do, being unaware of the difference between their impulses and their intentions; but many writers criticise according to rules, and have

thereby brought criticism at times into a contempt that might have killed it, if the passion for sitting in judgment had not been as eternal in the human breast as hope. The man or book that fulfils the requirements of *a priori* criticism is generally salt that has not lost, but has never had, a savour. Thus Bagehot thought nothing of Abraham Lincoln and a great deal of Sir George Lewis. Here I am afraid it is necessary to warn a present-day reader against thinking immediately of Ely Place and society scandal. The Sir George Lewis of Bagehot's admiration was not the eminent solicitor, but Sir George Cornewall Lewis, author of treatises on ancient astronomy, ancient history and ancient languages; Secretary to the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and War Secretary in successive Palmerston ministries, and altogether as completely dead as it is possible for a departed statesman to be. Such are the idols that rationalist criticism sets up for worship. Bagehot was at fault, too, with greater men. While he says true things of Disraeli, he talks of that statesman's lack of influence over Englishmen in terms that every Primrose Day disproves; and his forecast of Gladstone's future certainly contains no hint of the now almost legendary "Grand Old Man." Bagehot's auditing of literary and political accounts is undeniably vigorous, and with complete impartiality he was ready to vivisect his friends as if he loved them. Yet it is well to remind ourselves that the man who is moved by his feelings is not commonly more at fault than

the man who is moved by his logic, and he has the advantage of being wrong more amiably.

But all this is the defect and not the essence of Bagehot's quality. In actual fact he is the most inspiriting of writers, as full of humour as of wisdom. No truer thing could be said of him than the remark, quoted by Hutton, that he made one either think or laugh,—usually both. He has all Macaulay's clearness, and if he has less than Macaulay's force, he has more than Macaulay's humour, and more than Macaulay's depth. He is a geniunely original writer, with a power of showing his subject from new standpoints. You have seen pictures of cathedral interiors with central aisle bisecting the nave into precisely similar halves and leading straight to a tiny altar in the middle of the composition. Bagehot gives you no such view. His, rather, is the art that reveals a subject in illuminative glimpses from unexpected corners—here a strange vista, there a remote tomb, here the quaintly chiselled saint, there the incongruous gargoyle. The image is heavy, but it will serve; for in all he wrote there is an element of the unexpected. His bright phrases flash not only on the surface but into the depths of his subject. As an essayist (and he is essentially that) Bagehot's popularity is perceptibly increasing. He has, in a degree quite remarkable in an Englishman, the quality that the French call *esprit*; and, like the French, he was not afraid to use in writing the cultivated spoken language of his countrymen. Indeed, many passages

of the essays have all the easy intimacy and sparkle of first-rate conversation, as far removed from the pompous and the forced as from the slangy and the slip-shod. But he is not merely amusing. His note of mingled gravity and levity is quite his own. He can be as cynical and worldly as you please, as in his vivid letters on the *coup d'état*, and just as other-worldly in the essays and asides that touch upon the perilous topics of faith and morals. He is thus a grateful writer to the ordinary man. We are neither beasts nor angels. Our feet are planted on the earth, but our eyes scan the heavens; and so we are glad of a writer who knows our limitations and our aspirations and is kind to both.

A RARE TRAVELLER: W. H. HUDSON

By Ernest Rhys

Picturesque topographers and guides to famous places are many. The real discoverers and born naturalists, able to make a country new and wonderful even to the people who have lived in it all their lives, are few at the best of times.

It was the author of *The Paradox Club* who first announced, some years ago, a traveller from South America who had rediscovered Britain. The traveller's name recalled Hudson's Bay and Henry Hudson the Navigator; but his own initials were W. H. and his country was Guayana. To that side of the world, after writing several books about the wilds of London, Sussex, Wilts, Hampshire and Cornwall, Hudson later returned in his unfinished autobiography—*Far Away and Long Ago.* A strange book, as biographies and autobiographies go, treating of nature, human nature, and aspects of life that to-day are often left out of the reckoning, its pages recall some of the earlier books that made its writer known—*Idle Days in Paraguay, The Naturalist in La Plata, South American Sketches,*

The Purple Land that England Lost, and the perfect little Indian romance, *Green Mansions*, which is, in its wild disguise personal too.

The spell of these early South American adventures was so strong and the vision of the world they unfolded so remarkable, that originally they left one wishing almost that the writer would write only of Guayana and the neighbouring lands. But another and older instinct was in his blood, which led him over to this country, and in his English adventures he fully kept his sense of discovery. He described them like a man coming fresh to the scene, while yet feeling the place association that usually comes only with old acquaintance.

This dual interest much increases the effect of his writing. In "The Shepherd of the Downs" he looked on that Sussex country with the eyes of an heir to an old estate, back from exile. But the land of his birth is still in his mind, and every wilder aspect of the one calls up the spirit and the colour of the other. So Wiltshire and Guayana were both in a way mother-earth to him; the South Downs remind him of La Plata, Paraguay and the Banda Oriental, and behind the scenes described in his English pages loom up the deserts and splendours of the new world seen from the top of Ytaioa. In Sussex a day on Kingston Hill (near Lewes) does the trick:

> The wide extent of unenclosed and untilled earth, its sunburnt colour and its solitariness, when no person was in sight; the vast blue sky, with no mist or cloud on it; the burning sun and wind, and the

sight of thousands upon thousands of balls or stars of down, reminded me of old days on horseback on the open pampa—an illimitable waste of rust-red thistles, and the sky above covered with its million floating flecks of white.

By this reversion and his power of bringing an appreciable strangeness into a familiar bit of landscape, he expresses in a fashion peculiar to himself what we may call the primitive colours of the English uplands.

His feeling for them was that of a countryman who was yet a far traveller, a great naturalist, an artist in wild life. To him any scene where there was room, open sky and plenty of wing-space, was haven enough, though to others it seemed treeless and uninviting. He took a place like Winterbourne Bishop—the village without any ivied relic or new hotel to attract the tourist—and make it into the mirror of that place-memory which haunts us like a repeated dream. He could take a tree, as in *El Ombú*, and make it reveal life upon life, generation after generation, in the story it tells. The result is one only attained by an uncommon conjunction of the right subject and the fit man to deal with it.

The actual narrator in *El Ombú* is a Spanish-American exile; and something of a Spanish gravity in the style much enhances the narrative illusion:

Do you hear the mangangá, the carpenter bee, in the foliage over our heads? Look at him, like a ball of shining gold among the green leaves, suspended in one place, humming loudly. Ah, señor, the years that are gone, the people that have lived and died,

speak to me thus audibly when I am sitting here by myself. These are memories; but there are other things that come back to us from the past; I mean ghosts. Sometimes, at midnight, the whole tree, from its great roots to its topmost leaves, is seen from a distance shining like white fire. What is that fire, seen of so many, which does not scorch the leaves? And sometimes, when a traveller lies down here to sleep the siesta, he hears sounds of footsteps coming and going, and noises of dogs and fowls, and of children shouting and laughing, and voices of people talking. But when he starts up and listens, the sounds grow faint, and seem at last to pass away into the tree with a low murmur as of wind among the leaves.

The story of this haunted tree is one to be read out of doors—under English trees, let us say, that reflect by their likeness in unlikeness the great trunk of the tropical Ombú. No story that I know, written in our time, so conveys the desire of life, and the extremest cruelty of death, without once breaking the taleteller's profound pleasure in the things he has to relate. In *Green Mansions* too, it may be remembered, the daughter of the Di-di meets her fate in a tree; and that story can be read along with *El Ombú* and the later English tale *An Old Thorn*, which form a trilogy without a parallel in English fiction.

More about the Ombú tree is to be learnt from *Far Away and Long Ago*:

The house where I was born was named *Los Veinte-cinco Ombúes*, that is the "Twenty-five Ombú Trees." For there were in fact just so many of them in a long row. It is a tree of huge girth, and yet the wood is soft and spongy, unfit for firewood and other-

wise useless, and the leaves are poisonous. Being of so little service to man it is likely to die out: but it formed a gigantic landmark on those South American plains and gave welcome shade to man and horse from the sun.

On the Pampas or on the Downs, we find how important a rôle is that of the single figure in the foreground. A tree, a shepherd, a beggar-on-horseback, a hermit like "Con-Stair Lovair," a patriarch like Don Evaristo Penalva serves to focus to a fine degree the particular spot of earth that is described. On the South Downs, it may be a picture of a farm-boy, "The Boy with the Thistle":

> He wore a round grey peakless cap, and for ornament he had fastened in the middle of it, where there had perhaps once been a top-knot or ball, a big woolly thistle-flower.

No doubt there are dangers in this kind of figurative particularity. Some people who attempt it become too diffuse in their wish to be exact, and end by growing garrulous over a bit of straw or a stray pig. Again, a wrong word or a touch of self-consciousness is fatal as the cough of the hunter who hopes to pass for a stone or a tree-trunk when stalking a deer. The naturalist in Hudson saves him at the point where you may think him getting too notionable for his woodcraft. Indeed it is the reaction between nature and human nature in his work which makes it interesting. The insect race and the bird race and the human race—are they not alike alive, alike confounded by the mortal decay of things? In the September

pages of his Sussex book, he described "the wind sweeping through the yellow bennets with a long scythe-like sound." Then the thought of the past summer's insect life, and the noise of all those fine small voices blending into one voice, and the glistening of their minute swift-moving bodies, like thin dark lines, on the air, overtakes him:

> And now in so short a time, in a single day and night as it seems, it is all over, the feast and fairy dance of life; the myriads of shining gem-like bodies turned to dead dust, the countless multitudes of brilliant little individual souls dissipated into thin air, and blown whithersoever the wind blows.

It may seem that the impression this leaves is too mournful, but though a tinge of melancholy—even, it may be, of ingrained melancholy—does show in these pages, the whole sense of the spectacle of life which they bear is a large and invigorative one.

Take the sketch of Shepherd Caleb Bawcombe's mother and the black sheep-dog, Jack. The dog was of the old Welsh type once common in Wiltshire, and a great adder-killer: "I can see her now," said Caleb, "sitting on that furze bush, in her smock and leggings, with a big hat like a man's on her head—for that's how she dressed." But presently she jumped up crying out that she felt a snake under her, and snatched off the shawl on which she had been sitting. There, sure enough, appeared the head of an adder: and Jack dashed at the bush, seized the snake and killed it.

Take again the "History of Tommy Ierat," in the same book. The long life and curiously easy death of this man, as there told, are affecting as the end of Sir Launcelot in the *Morte d'Arthur*. One can hardly say more than that.

In the last chapter of his autobiography, by turning the glass upon himself he shows where his boyish hopes and fears were leading him, when his own story was but a quarter told, with the years of his full experience still to come:

> . . . Barring accidents, I could count on thirty, forty, even fifty years, with their summers and autumns and winters. And that was the life I desired . . . the life the heart can conceive—*the earth life*.

Of that life so conceived he was the natural historian, and it is worth note that, when other tests fail, he got his effect by looking into the most curious of all natural phenomena—himself. For Nature, the arch-revealer, when she finds a man to her mind, can make him a part of her own expression. *Idle Days in Patagonia*—a book in which the professional naturalist seems at times struggling with the natural man—serves to show how it came about. There, as he describes the bird-sounds, and the resonant quality of their notes, which tells you of the mysterious bell, "somewhere in the air, suspended on nothing," or, as he recalls the Plains, and the grey waste, he has already let you far into his secret.

He speaks of the state of mind, induced by the

change of consciousness, that comes to a man who has been long in a state of solitude. It leads, he says, to "a revelation of an unfamiliar and unsuspected nature" hidden under the nature we commonly recognise; and it is accounted for by a sudden awakening in us of the old primitive animal instinct which is often accompanied (as it is in the very young) by an intense delight. To that delight, instinctive yet spiritual in its higher development, he returns in the portrait he draws of his mother:

> Everything beautiful in sight or sound, that affected me, came associated with her, and this was especially so with flowers. Her feeling for them was little short of adoration. To her they were little voiceless messengers from heaven, symbols of a place and a beauty beyond our power to imagine. Her favourites were mostly among wild flowers that are never seen in England. But [he says] if ever I should return to the Pampas I should go out in search of them, and seeing them again, feel that I was communing with her spirit.

This is a confession which explains something of the faculty that must be possessed by one who is more than a mere chronicler of wild life—the curious power which can see earth transformed by sympathetic understanding. The delight he found in that life did not fail as time went; it grew instead, and gained a deeper purchase upon his mind. And even when he was shut out from Nature in London for long periods, sick and poor and friendless, it was his sure consolation.

One wayfaring book of his remains to be described—*Afoot in England.* It appeared more than ten years ago, but I only chanced upon it after reading the later English books. Some chapters and pages of it are in his most characteristic vein; and they help one to find the measure of his traveller's philosophy. It has an introduction on Guide Books well worth pondering. He goes to a Guide Book town, much boomed, made notorious by railway placards; and even there he comes upon a peal of bells which recalls the Monk of Eynsham's Easter Bells—"a ringing of marvellous sweetness as if all the bells in the world, or whatsoever is of sounding, had been rung together at once." He travels in Cobbett's footsteps to Coombe and "Uphusband" or Hurstbourne Tarrant; he goes to Salisbury, Stonehenge, Bath, and Wells. He considers cathedrals anew as bird resorts. At Salisbury he finds a wondrous population of birds: swallows, martins, swifts; to say nothing of daws, starlings and sparrows: even kestrels, and stock-doves, instead of the common town pigeons, are of that church-keeping company:

Nor could birds in all this land find a more beautiful building to rest on—unless I except Wells Cathedral, solely on account of its west front, beloved of daws, where their numerous black company have so fine an appearance. Salisbury, so vast in size, is yet a marvel of beauty in its entirety. Still to me the sight of the birds' airy gambols, and the sound of their voices, from the deep human-like dove tones to the perpetual subdued rippling running-water

sound of the aerial martins, must always be a principal element in the beautiful effect. Nor do I know a building where Nature has done more in enhancing the loveliness of man's work with her added colouring. . . . This colouring is most beautiful [he adds] on a day of flying clouds and a blue sky with a brilliant sunshine on the vast building after a shower.

A cathedral to him, as to Ibañez, is a cathedral and something more. It is part of the indigenous growth of the country, and, in exploring it, he is like St. Brandan in *The Golden Legend* discovering an Isle of Birds.

A discoverer of strange things in familiar places, Hudson saw birds as another race, not so far from our own, a little more aerial, a little less earthy. At another remove, the insect race is again behind, or a little below the bird race. The lowest of all, I am afraid, is of the homunculus type—one which invariably moves his spleen. For we must admit that he is splenetic at times. He is angry with the Toby Philpots of Chichester; he is annoyed with Cornish folk—I imagine because they are not like the Devon folk he loves so well. He is angry with fashionable women who go to Holy Communion with aigrettes in their hats. He is annoyed by dirty little boys who follow their instincts, and stone or catch little birds. But this is only because he is a kindhearted vagabond who is ready to love all creatures that on earth do dwell, so long as they are not too degenerate to preserve their natural instincts. He is one among the rare itinerants who have revealed the beauty of this country by their

affectionate art—including White of Selborne, Old Crome, Constable, Turner, Richard Jefferies, Wordsworth, and certain unnamed and undistinguished provincial poets. There are pages of his that enshrine scenes and memories of places to be ranked with Old Crome's "Mousehold Heath," the picture of Appin sketched by Dorothy Wordsworth in her *Tour in Scotland*, Dyer's *Grongar Hill*, Bewick's thumb-nail vignettes of Prudhoe-on-Tyne, and Constable's "Old Sarum."

In days to come, when nearly all the wildness of Britain is tamed, men will look back with envy to Hudson's account of the birds in Savernake, and of the London daws, now growing scarcer every year, that rose to fly with the homing crows as they passed over Kensington Gardens.

Of two more books which are part of his English cycle, the first is *Birds in Town and Village*, which has a greenfinch interlude for the consolation of true bird-lovers, a charming tale of a duet between a girl and a nightingale, and many other characteristic vagabond passages. What will surprise some readers, less tolerant than the naturalist himself, is a critical appreciation of a concert of London sparrows. The fit sequel to that is the chapter on "Chanticleer"; and there are other London contributions and notably one on the moorhens in Hyde Park. The book is illustrated by some wonderfully brilliant bird-portraits by E. J. Detmold—brilliantly coloured and sunlit. Indeed

the blue-tit and goldfinch, in one picture, are almost dazzling—every wing-feather detailed like a fan.

The other is *The Book of a Naturalist*, which adds some delightful pages, natural and human-natural, to the writer's account of Britain rediscovered. It opens with a pine wood, and it ends with earthworms and an experiment with acacia-leaves to test the value of the worm as a lawn-maker. Two chapters on the mole, two on the heron considered as an ancient British notable and aristocrat, and four on serpents, native and foreign, serve to carry on the record. The story of the she-rat that communed with her natural enemy, a cat, and in the end tried to steal the fluff from the cat's abundant side-whiskers, and so provoked a misunderstanding, is an unexpected diversion, since Hudson was not fond of rats, and has even been known to call them those "cursèd cattle." But the book is above all to be gratefully remembered for its scenes and episodes of the wild chronicle of the English shires:—an enchanting June evening in the Valley of the Wiltshire Avon, when the ghost-moths were out upon their love-dance over the dusky meadows; an adder episode in the New Forest, when the creature proved to have an under surface of the most exquisite turquoise blue; or a brown-purple field of fritillaries, or ginny-flowers, which are of the wild lily kind, pendulous as a harebell, and of a delicate pink chequered with dark maroon-purple.

These voyages and discoveries seemed to occur

to Hudson so easily, that they leave one newly penetrated with the sense of the wild splendour, the beauty inexhaustible, of the new-old country that he travelled. No need for him to go back to Guayana, since he found his tropics in a Wiltshire meadow, and his wood beyond the world in Hants or Dorset. There are many wild places—downs, woods and lowlands, that will miss hereafter that tall, grey, falcon-faced traveller.

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